

An Introduction to
**NINETEENTH-
CENTURY
ART**

Michelle Facos



An Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Art

Using the tools of the “new” art history (feminism, Marxism, social context, etc.) *An Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Art* offers a richly textured, yet clear and logical, introduction to nineteenth-century art and culture. This textbook will provide readers with a basic historical framework of the period and the critical tools for interpreting and situating new and unfamiliar works of art.

Michelle Facos goes beyond existing histories of nineteenth-century art, which often focus solely on France, Britain, and the United States, to incorporate artists and artworks from Scandinavia, Germany, and Eastern Europe.

The book expertly balances its coverage of trends and individual artworks: where the salient trends are clear, trend-setting works are highlighted, and the complexity of the period is respected by situating all works in their proper social and historical context. In this way, the student reader achieves a more nuanced understanding of the way in which the story of nineteenth-century art is the story of the ways in which artists and society grappled with the problem of modernity.

Key pedagogical features include:

- Data boxes provide statistics, timelines, charts, and historical information about the period to further situate artworks.
- Text boxes highlight extracts from original sources, citing the ideas of artists and their contemporaries, including historians, philosophers, critics, and theorists, to place artists and works in the broader

context of aesthetic, cultural, intellectual, social, and political conditions in which artists were working.

- Beautifully illustrated with over 250 color images.
- Margin notes and glossary definitions.
- Online resources at www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos with access to a wealth of information, including original documents pertaining to artworks discussed in the textbook, contemporary criticism, timelines and maps to enrich your understanding of the period and allow for further comparison and exploration.

Chapters take a thematic approach combined within an overarching chronology and more detailed discussions of individual works are always put in the context of the broader social picture, thus providing students with a sense of art history as a controversial and alive arena of study.

Michelle Facos teaches art history at Indiana University, Bloomington. Her research explores the changing relationship between artists and society since the Enlightenment and issues of identity. Prior publications include *Nationalism and the Nordic Imagination: Swedish Painting of the 1890s* (1998), *Art, Culture and National Identity in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, co-edited with Sharon Hirsh (2003), and *Symbolist Art in Context* (2009).

“Finally, an updated, delightfully usable survey of nineteenth-century art is available. The text is clearly written, jargon free yet conceptually informed, and clearly organized. Facos expands areas that are sparsely covered in other surveys, for example history of photography, women in art, and landscape as a genre. The boxes with primary sources and the easy-to-access online extension of the text are ideal ways to open up complex issues and elegantly facilitate open-ended classroom discussion.”

Lucy Bowditch, *The College of Saint Rose, Albany, USA*

“This fresh survey of nineteenth-century art provides a welcome new perspective. Redressing a long overdue imbalance, artistic developments in America, Britain, Eastern Europe, Germany, and Scandinavia are set beside the familiar story of French art, enriching our understanding of the historical context. The many insights and discoveries in this text make it useful to anyone interested in this fundamental era of modern art.”

Jeffery Howe, *Boston College, USA*

“European and American art of the nineteenth century cannot be understood apart from the social conditions of the day. Michelle Facos recognizes this, explaining the significance of the visual arts of this tumultuous century in relation to such historical forces as the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, the nascent women’s movement, nationalism, and imperialism. Yet Facos never takes her eyes off the real focus of the book: painting, sculpture, and graphic arts produced in Europe and North America between 1750 and 1900. Her close analysis of artworks emphasizes aesthetic traditions while also highlighting artistic innovation.”

Elizabeth Mansfield, *New York University, USA*

“This is an excellent textbook for students of nineteenth-century art. Facos’s synthesis ranges widely across the countries and genres of nineteenth-century Europe. The emphasis on Paris, characteristic of many other such textbooks, is modified by broadening horizons to include developments in Germany, Britain, Scandinavia, Italy and central Europe. The traditional modernist narrative is displaced by an open-textured historical approach in which the diversity of art production is brought to life in its own context and understood on its own terms. The book is cogent in its broad outlines while also offering compelling readings of individual case-studies that will awaken the interest and curiosity of students. An impressive achievement.”

Nina Lübbren, *Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK*

“This is an engaging and stimulating analysis of art in the ‘long nineteenth-century’. Beginning its narrative in the late eighteenth-century, the book offers a view of art which is clear and consistent but never simplistic or reductive. Michelle Facos manages a neat trick of being simultaneously nuanced and subtle, yet also direct and transparent ... The complex variety of ways in which an image can relate to its contemporary world, through subject, technique, embedded narrative, genre, fashion and more, are all discussed in a relaxed and confident manner which never allows the complexity to become confusion ... I enjoyed this book.”

John Morrison, *University of Aberdeen, UK*

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MICHELLE FACOS

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2011 in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Simultaneously published in the UK
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2011.

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Facos, Michelle.

An introduction to nineteenth century art : artists and the challenge of modernity / Michelle Facos. — 1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Art, Modern—19th century. 2. Art and society—History—19th century. I. Title. II. Title: Introduction to 19th century art. III. Title: Artists and the challenge of modernity.

N6450.F35 2011

709.03'4—dc22

2010031377

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0-203-83307-4 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN13: 978-0-415-78070-4 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-78072-8 (pbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-203-83307-0 (ebk)

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- 4.22 Friedrich Overbeck, *Joseph Sold by His Brothers*, 1816–17. Fresco and tempera, 243 × 304 cm (8 × 10 ft). From Casa Bartholdy, Rome. © bpk – Bildagentur für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte oder die Kurzform bpk / Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Klaus Gökén.
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- 5.2 Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, *The Ancient City of Agrigentum*, 1787. Oil on canvas, 110 × 164 cm (3 ft 9¼ in × 5 ft 4½ in). Louvre, Paris, France. Photo © Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.
- 5.3 Joseph Anton Koch, *Apollo and the Thessalonian Shepherds*, 1835. Oil on canvas, 79 × 116 cm (31 × 45⅝ in). © Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.
- 5.4 Joseph M.W. Turner, *The Devil's Bridge*, 1802. Watercolor on paper. Private Collection. © Agnew's, London, UK / The Bridgeman Art Library.
- 5.5 Joseph Wright of Derby, *Eruption of Vesuvius*, 1776. Oil on canvas. Private Collection. Photo © Scala / White Images / Art Resource, NY.
- 5.6 John Sell Cotman, *Chirk Aqueduct*, c. 1806–07. Watercolor, 32 × 23 cm (12½ × 9 in). © V&A Images / Victoria & Albert Museum, London.
- 5.7 Joseph M.W. Turner, *Snow Storm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps*, exhibited 1812. Oil on canvas, 146 × 238 cm (4 ft 9 in × 7 ft 9 in). © Tate, London 2010.
- 5.8 Joseph M.W. Turner, *Rain, Steam, and Speed—The Great Western Railway*, 1844. Oil on canvas, 91 × 122 (35⅞ × 49 in). Turner Bequest, 1856. © 2010 The National Gallery, London.

- 5.9 John Constable, *The Hay Wain*, 1821. Oil on canvas, 130 × 185 cm (4 ft 3 in × 6 ft 1 in). © 2010 The National Gallery, London / Art Resource, NY.
- 5.10 John Constable, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, 1831. Oil on canvas. Private Collection. Photo © The Bridgeman Art Library.
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- 5.12 Camille Corot, *Chartres Cathedral*, 1830. Oil on canvas, 64 × 52 cm (25¼ × 20¼ in). Musée du Louvre, Paris. © RMN / Gérard Blot.
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- 6.4 Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy Trioson, *Monsieur Belley*, 1797. Oil on canvas, 158 × 111 cm (5 ft 2¼ in × 3 ft 7¾ in). Chateaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles, France. Photo © Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY. Photo by Gérard Blot.

- 6.5 Joseph M.W. Turner, *The Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying—Typhoon Coming On)*, 1840. Oil on canvas, 91 × 123 cm (3 × 4 ft). Photo © 2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 99.22.
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- 6.9 Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson, *The Funeral of Atala*, 1808. Oil on canvas, 167 × 210 cm (5 ft 5 in × 6 ft 11 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris. © RMN / René-Gabriel Ojéda.
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- 6.17 Charles Cordier, *The Jewish Woman of Algiers*, 1862. Algerian onyx-marble, bronze and gilt-bronze, enamel, amethyst eyes; white marble socles; red and white marble pedestal with gilt-bronze mounts and ornaments, life-size, 99 × 61 × 28 cm (39⅞ × 24 × 11 in). European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Fund, 2006. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA / Art Resource, NY.
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- 13.7 Auguste Rodin, *The Gates of Hell*, 1880–90. Bronze, 600 × 400 × 100 cm (19 ft 8¹/₄ in × 13 ft 1¹/₂ in × 3 ft 1¹/₂ in). Musée Rodin, Paris, France. Photo © Peter Willi / The Bridgeman Art Library.
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Acknowledgments

My passion for history was ignited by the inspiring history-teacher brothers Doug and Lyall Stewart. It was sustained in college by Jerry Townsend and Michael Haltzel, and given direction by Kirk Varnedoe, whose nineteenth-century art history course at Columbia University established the trajectory of my career. At New York University's Institute of Fine Arts I was privileged also to have studied with H.W. Janson, Robert Rosenblum, and Gert Schiff, formidable scholars of nineteenth-century art who shaped my ideas in important ways, even if methodologically I found greater inspiration in the scholarship of Albert Boime, T.J. Clark, Robert Herbert, and Eric Hobsbawm. Over the years, my ideas about art and history have benefitted immensely from exchanges with colleagues including Patricia Ashton, Patricia G. Berman, Emily D. Bilksi, Hans-Olof Boström, Katarina Brandes, Anna Brzyski, Karen Churchill, Björn Fredlund, Nina Gourianova, Beth Harris, Jürgen Jüpner, Michelle Kaiserlian, Kenneth Ledford, Steven Mansbach, Thor J. Mednick, Kasper Monrad, Marsha Morton, Joan Pachner, Carmen Popescu, Svetlana Rakic, Janet Rauscher, Christopher Reed, Alan Rocke, John Rowland, Kathleen Sagmeister-Fox, Alexis Smith, Dror Wahrman, and Michael Zimmermann. The questions of my students at Case Western Reserve University and Indiana University, Bloomington were the direct inspiration for this book.

I am deeply appreciative of the comments on chapter drafts made by numerous anonymous readers, as well as by Charlotte Ashby, Lucy Bowditch, Elizabeth Childs, Claude H. Cookman, Davor Dzalto, David Ehrenpris, Marc S. Gerstein, Anne Helmreich, Lisa Kurzner, Elizabeth Mansfield, Emanuel J. Mickel, Bogdan Rakic, Johathan Ribner, Jennifer Shaw, and Terri Switzer. The text has improved immensely due to their careful readings, insights, and suggestions, although the book's shortcomings are entirely mine. Louise Arizzoli, Kathryn Bastin, Andrea Meyertholen, and Barbara Weindling generously advised on translations from French and German.

Essential research assistance was provided by numerous individuals and institutions. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Mary Buechley, Karin Byggmark, Roger Crum, Kaj Hällquist, Kalle Nässlund, Bart Pushaw, Tony White, and the capable staffs of the university libraries in Hamburg, Göttingen, Växjö, and Bloomington, IN. I spent many happy hours researching in numerous archives and libraries, including the Royal Library and the Nationalmuseum library in Stockholm, the Royal Danish Academy of Art in Copenhagen, the State Library in Berlin and the Bavarian State Library in Munich, the library of the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the British Library in London, the New York Public Library, and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. In moments of need, helpful information was also provided by colleagues near and far: George Alter, Susan Brodie, Christiane Gruber, Carrie Haslett, Giles Knox, Svetozar Koljevic, Lauren Lessing, Andrei Molotiu, Elyce Rotella, Jon Small, Margo Stavros, Patricia Trutty-Coohill, Julie van Voorhis, David Wilkins, and Elizabeth Zammiello. My multi-talented husband, Per Nordahl, helped with research, photography, creation of data boxes, and technical aspects of the website, and my daughter, Hanna Francis, aided

in fact-checking and research, and accompanied me to many of the sites where works of art were executed and are now housed. Finally, I would like to thank Katie Larson, who conducted research with breath-taking diligence and efficiency in the final phase of this project, and Fenella Flinn, who over the years has managed numerous tasks great and small.

The enthusiasm of my editor, Natalie Foster, for creating a complementary website made this project a delight. Together with Andy Pearson at White Fuse Media we created what we hope is a useful tool for students and teachers. Megan Robertson offered especially valuable assistance in providing content, and I am thankful to the many others who contributed, including Rene Gehr, Emilee Mathews, and Erwin Pauwels, with apologies to those whose names I have omitted.

I am indebted to David Koloszyc for his patience and persistence in obtaining permissions and images, and to those who came to my rescue in securing images that seemed otherwise elusive: Nanette Brewer, Kathleen Cohen, Marta Fodor, Eileen Frye, Agnes Fülemlé, Joanna Hanna, Rhonda Kasl, Hubertus Kohle, Anna Louise Mason, Michel Natier, Colin Shearer, Kathy Ann Taylor, Jens Toft, and Danilo Vuksanovic.

Kara Hattersley-Smith initiated this project, which has been shepherded to completion at Routledge by the capable hands of Natalie Foster, Sarah Mabley, and Charlotte Wood; it has been a privilege and delight to work with such supportive and resourceful editors. The text is a smoother read thanks to the editing expertise of Lisa Blackwell. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation supported an indispensable and exhilarating year of research and the Alfried Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg, Greifswald provided a tranquil setting in which to bring the project to completion. Finally, Bruce Cole's generosity as department chair and the supportive research environment of Indiana University, Bloomington allowed me the flexibility necessary to finish this project in a timely fashion.

Introduction

There is no single story of nineteenth-century art, although a canon (dominant narrative) developed in the twentieth century that gives the impression that there is. This canon emphasizes French art to the near exclusion of art produced elsewhere in Europe. Artists from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe and Scandinavia are generally omitted from histories of nineteenth-century art in any meaningful way because they are not considered significant contributors to the canonical development of art. This (modernist) canon holds that abstraction is superior to other forms of visual expression. Artworks that appear to lead toward that become part of the canon and those that do not are excluded.

The modernist canon originated in the early twentieth century with German art historians who had a very specific ideological purpose. Their purpose was partly anti-establishment; the German government officially endorsed precisely detailed realism, clear narratives, and obedience to the laws of perspective because they considered this style Germanic. Painting in a highly subjective way (as the Impressionists did) was coded French, and undesirable, due in part to Franco-Germanic rivalry in the nineteenth century. But the preference of these German art historians for anti-establishment trends also grew from a desire to promote internationalism over nationalism, and freedom over regulation.

The skewed historical perspective that resulted was rarely questioned and became accepted as true. Thousands of artworks considered beautiful, influential, and important at the time of their creation (and even by subsequent generations) vanished from history. Later art historians who believed in art's inevitable evolution from naturalism to abstraction perpetuated the modernist canon. It supported their preference for artworks that were non-referential and asserted an art object's material properties (size, shape, color, relationship to space).

Needless to say, judging as relevant only those works of art that support a narrow set of ideas results in a flawed view of history. It reinforces erroneous assumptions about the past and conceals the rich and complex texture of nineteenth-century art and life. While it is important to identify links in the chain that lead to modern art (many of them in France), subordinating all other art production misrepresents history. Artists in the nineteenth century worked under a wide range of conditions, were exposed to an enormous number of ideas and influences, and enjoyed greater freedom in making choices about their subject matter and technique than in any earlier period of history. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of nineteenth-century art is its increasing heterogeneity, as artists searched for visual languages

singularly suited to their diverse purposes. It is impossible to understand the texture of nineteenth-century art history without taking into account artists working beyond the borders of Western Europe. Many of the artists included in this book were successful in the West, where they exhibited, received honors and awards, and where their works entered public and private collections, were published in magazines, and sold in reproduction. Most of these artists are familiar to audiences in their native countries, where they are cornerstones of the national narrative.

Looking at the history of nineteenth-century art from the perspective of the modernist canon gives a skewed understanding of both art and historical conditions. It obscures the single greatest change affecting artists during this period: that of patronage. In 1750 most artists produced works on commission, but by 1900 they mainly produced works of art on speculation. This impacted artists differently depending on their temperament, socio-economic status, the political system that governed them, and the historical moment in which they were working.

This book is motivated by a desire to present a nuanced and balanced view of art produced between 1750 and 1900 and to explore the ways in which artists, events, and ideas related to one another. It seeks to understand the nineteenth-century art world as it was, examining why artists made the choices they did, why certain styles and subjects emerged and vanished, and how contemporary audiences and fellow artists reacted to these artworks. As a survey, it does not exhaustively explore any individual artwork or artist. The criteria for the selection of artworks includes: contemporary fame or influence, significance as exemplars of dominant trends, and utility as touchstones to then-contemporary topics. This book also aims to provide readers with a basic historical framework of the period and the critical tools for interpreting and situating new and unfamiliar works of art. It is organized roughly chronologically, with thematically oriented chapters considering topics of particular relevance during particular decades. It is hoped that this approach will furnish a dense context for studying works produced by artists in diverse locations and at different moments in time.

This book models the kind of reflective and critical inquiry expected of students in historical disciplines. Observations and interpretations are anchored in historical evidence and resist assumptions based on visual evidence alone or the supposition that historical conditions were similar in instances when they were not. For instance, a situation considered shocking in the nineteenth century might be considered normal now, but if we interpret a painting based on this assumption, then we misunderstand it. Particular colors, for instance, were charged with political significance for contemporary audiences, but pass under the radar screen of uninformed viewers a century later.

This book also promotes a scholarly approach by documenting references to original sources and citing the words and ideas of artists and their contemporaries. The purpose is to become acquainted with individual artists and artworks as well as the larger matrix of aesthetic, cultural, intellectual, social, and political conditions in which artists worked. Material is presented in a way intended to help readers feel closer to life during this period, one which differed in fundamental ways from our own.

To circumvent the limitations of a book, there is a companion website designed to broaden and deepen an understanding of nineteenth-century art. The website will expand over time. One of its most useful features is excerpts from original

documents pertaining to artworks discussed in the book. These include descriptions and explanations by artists, as well as additional texts (including poems) that artists wrote in connection with their artworks. It also includes selections of contemporary criticism—exhibition reviews, opinions of fellow artists and intellectuals, as well as brief selections by scholars who offer competing interpretations of individual artworks. The website includes a bibliography targeted at the artworks and ideas discussed in the book, charts, timelines (who was in Rome when, for instance), and links to reliable informational and image sites. It includes maps for each chapter so readers can locate places mentioned, and links to historical maps that show the changing contours of national borders. It is hoped that these aids will enrich the reader's understanding of the period and allow for further comparison and exploration.

A Time of Transition

These portraits of the Enlightenment philosopher Denis Diderot (Figure 1.1) and the sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt (Figure 1.2) illustrate the important role played by both rational (intellectual) and irrational (intuitive) forces in the story of nineteenth-century art. Both men tried to understand their world—Diderot, by collecting the sum of human knowledge into the world’s first encyclopedia, to which Thomas Jefferson and others contributed (28 volumes, 1751–72), and by carefully describing, analyzing, and categorizing the visible world. Messerschmidt (1736–83) recorded outward evidence of inner psycho-emotional conditions in 64 sculptured self-portraits, assuming that invisible forces had visible manifestations. Messerschmidt made such faces in order to rid himself of “demons” that invaded his psyche regularly after an illness in 1774. Having devised a successful system of self-healing based on an empirical method, Messerschmidt created these sculptures as models to help others suffering from the same problem. While Messerschmidt’s *Intentional Fool* may seem the zany antithesis of the thoughtful Diderot, considering the two together suggests that the search for truth and understanding can take a variety of paths.



Figure 1.1
Jean-Baptiste Pigalle, *Denis Diderot*, 1777.
Bronze, 52 × 35 × 25 cm (20½ × 13¾ × 9¾
in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 1.2
Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, *Intentional Fool*,
c. 1780. Alabaster, life-size. Belvedere, Vienna.

Despite their differences, Diderot and Lessing exemplify the radical school of Enlightenment thought which informed the innovative modernist spirit in nineteenth-century art. For them, the world could be understood only through empirical observation and unbiased analysis; preconceptions hindered the discovery of truth. Radicals championed equality as the highest human value. They felt this could be achieved only by minimizing class, economic, national, and religious differences. Radical Enlightenment ideas, also referred to as *la philosophie moderne*, advocated freedom, equality, and solidarity (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*). They gained support as liberal Enlightenment ideas failed to achieve the reforms necessary to maintain social stability in France and the American colonies (Israel 2010: 17).

Liberal Enlightenment thinkers considered existing European institutions (Christianity, monarchy, feudal system) and existing human differences (economic, intellectual, physical) part of a divine plan. They believed that reform and improvement should be gradual in order to preserve existing social and political structures, a position we would now label conservative. The Scottish economist Adam Smith, the English philosopher John Locke, and the French philosophers Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau championed liberal values, which were exemplified by England's parliamentary democracy (since 1688). Liberal ideas, with their respect for authority and tradition, exerted greater influence on Rococo and Neoclassical art, while radical ideas shaped Romanticism.

The eighteenth century was a complicated era with shifting alliances across economic, social, and political borders. The feudal system, with a hierarchy based on birth and land ownership, governed social and political relations. It divided society into three groups: nobility, clergy, and commoners (first, second, and third estates). Each nation-state had an official church and often prohibited other faiths. In France, for instance, Protestantism was illegal between 1685 and 1787. Schools were run by the church and charged fees; few members of the third estate were educated. In addition, members of the first and third estates often had differing or conflicting interests. The king and the aristocracy often vied for control and the third estate was extremely heterogeneous. The third estate, further divided into the (affluent) bourgeoisie and peasants, included financiers, merchants, industrialists, writers, artisans, servants, and farmers. Because social status could be improved only by marriage or favoritism, maneuvering to attract the patronage of powerful individuals was perhaps the century's most compelling source of motivation.

Engraving

a printed image made from an incised metal plate. Lines are incised on (usually) a copper plate with the use of a burin. Ink is poured on the plate, and seeps into the incision. The plate surface is wiped clean and when paper is pressed onto the plate it absorbs the ink in the crevices. The crevice edges wear down with each printing, so the first images are the sharpest ones. Engraving emerged in the fifteenth century and was especially popular in Germanic regions.

SOCIAL CRITIQUE

The corruption fostered by liberal values was critiqued most openly in Britain, which had greater freedom of the press than most other monarchies. William Hogarth (1697–1764), whose father lost his business and went to debtors' prison when Hogarth was ten years old, was a passionate social reformer. An **engraver** by training, he produced popular series of satirical prints intended to improve moral standards. These series, consisting of six to 12 prints, told their stories through images alone, were mass-produced, and inexpensive. To prevent bootlegging, Hogarth initiated the Engraving Copyright Act (1734) to protect an artist's right to profits from her or his engraved work. Hogarth pointed out injustice and immorality in all social classes. *Marriage à la Mode* (Marriage in Style—an eighteenth-century term for a marriage arranged for the financial or social benefit of the parents) highlighted the hideous consequences of



Figure 1.3
William Hogarth, *Marriage à la Mode: 2, The Tête à Tête*, c. 1743. Oil on canvas, 70 × 91 cm (27½ × 35¾ in). The National Gallery, London.

lust for money and social status. The loveless marriage of a poverty-stricken aristocrat to the daughter of a wealthy merchant results in deception, infidelity, murder, and suicide. Hogarth may have drawn inspiration from a famous poem of the same title by John Dryden, written in the 1670s. In it, Dryden wonders:

*Why should a foolish marriage vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now
When passion is decay'd?*

The Tête à Tête (1743, Figure 1.3) shows the aftermath of a night of partying. The mantelpiece clock indicates that the count has returned around 1:30 in the afternoon to a home whose disheveled condition reflects marital disharmony. The dog sniffs at a woman's nightcap hanging from the count's pocket after his evening fling. His broken sword indicates that he has been brawling and also attests to his diminishing power and status. During his absence, his wife, who eats a light breakfast, had a wild party—indicated by two carelessly abandoned violins and playing cards strewn about—and their servant clutches a stack of unpaid bills with an expression of despair. The clash of social classes—aristocratic and bourgeois (affluent members of the third estate)—is evidenced by the mantelpiece, where stylish Rococo porcelain chinoiserie flank a venerable Roman bust. The gap between reality and pretension is reinforced by the paintings hanging in the next room—a series of saints beside a draped nude. Here, Hogarth expressed radical Enlightenment ideas. He discredited popular misconceptions about the happy lives conferred by wealth and power, revealing how even the most privileged were wretched victims of a corrupt and inequitable society.

Hogarth's message reached a wide audience because *Marriage à la Mode* circulated in a large, affordable print edition (Figure 1.4). Publishers sensing a painting's profitability paid the artist a fee for print rights. The publisher then hired

Figure 1.4

William Hogarth, *Marriage à la Mode*, c. 1743. Plate 2, *The Tête à Tête*, Engraving. Indiana University Art Museum.



a professional engraver to execute the transfer of brushstrokes to lines on a copper plate, whose incised furrows were then filled with ink and printed onto paper (then handmade). In principle, a limitless number of prints could be issued. Hogarth intended to engrave *Marriage à la Mode* from the beginning. This is clear because when placed in sequence, the narrative of the engravings (which are always mirror images of the original paintings) can easily be read from left to right, but the paintings all appear reversed. Hogarth advertised that “the best masters in Paris” engraved the images because Parisian engravers had higher status than English ones (Nichols 1785: 262). In 1797 the paintings were bought by John Angerstein, whose collection formed the nucleus of England’s National Gallery.

MORAL REFORM

Stricter censorship required a more subtle approach to social critique in France. Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805) expressed reformatory Enlightenment ideas in scenes of contemporary life (genre) that delighted his public—from Catherine the Great, who purchased *Filial Piety* (Hermitage, St Petersburg) in 1765, to the radical Diderot. Greuze studied at the École Royale, was encouraged by sculptor Jean-Baptiste Pigalle (1714–85), and joined the Académie Royale in 1755 as a genre painter. In 1769, he applied as a history painter, but was rejected. Devastated, he refused to exhibit at the Salon exhibitions during the reign of Louis XVI. Greuze took revenge by holding well-attended private exhibitions in his Louvre studio during the same period as the Salon and making a fortune through sales of prints after his paintings.

The Salon was a biennial exhibition beginning in 1737 held by the Académie Royale at the Louvre. The Académie was founded in 1648 during the reign of Louis XIV, with a Roman outpost established in 1666. Based on the instructional principles of the first European art academy, the Academy of St Luke (established in Rome in

1593), the Académie Royale provided training for gifted artists at the École Royale (école = school). Graduates were expected to produce masterpieces glorifying France. Its success inspired rulers throughout Europe to establish their own academies. Advancement through the academic system occurred through a rigorous battery of competitions; those who succeeded were both talented and willing to conform to academic guidelines. Professors at the École Royale automatically became members of the Académie Royale; others, like Greuze, could apply. Académie members traveled in the best social circles, secured the best commissions, and had the right to show works at the Salon without submitting them to scrutiny by the jury.

The Salon was free, lasted for about six weeks, and attracted cultured middle-class (bourgeois) visitors and aristocrats. Among the regulars was Diderot—often considered the first art critic—who reviewed the exhibitions for *Correspondance littéraire*, an elite newsletter with a small circulation among the European nobility. Diderot's zeal for social reform motivated his encyclopedia project, and he praised Greuze's images as “moral painting” beginning with the 1763 Salon. Diderot considered “moral painting” an entirely new category of subject matter, one in which a morally instructive theme was conveyed through the actions of anonymous, contemporary commoners. The Académie separated subjects into five categories according to their expression of noble or banal ideas and the intellectual effort required in composing them. History painting ranked highest because it dealt with religion and human deeds (literary or historical) and demanded the greatest imaginative and scholarly effort. Portraiture came next because it concerned living (usually prominent) people, followed by genre painting (everyday scenes of anonymous people), landscape painting (requiring little imagination but sharp perception, since nature was not static), and finally still life painting (dead, arranged nature). In promoting Greuze's “moral painting” Diderot argued that its superficial resemblance to genre inadequately conveyed the seriousness of its message, which allied it more closely with history painting.

By the 1750s the Marquis de Marigny, Louis XV's Directeur-Général des Bâtiments du Roi (a kind of interior minister), realized that history painting failed to stir noble sentiments as originally intended. Like Diderot, he considered Greuze's simple yet powerful genre scenes possibilities for reviving the purpose of history painting, an unconventional attitude attributable to his status as an ennobled member of the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, not part of the aristocratic establishment. To this end, Marigny commissioned Greuze to paint *Village Bride* (1761, Louvre), whose popular success irritated the Académie, which felt its authority violated.

The Drunken Cobbler (1782, Figure 1.5) typifies Greuze's popular, moralizing genre painting, admired for its edifying subjects, story-like compositions, and accomplished technique. Here, an inebriated shoemaker greets his worried family—even the family dog assumes an accusatory posture. The mother clearly performs her duties, but the father's negligence imperils family security. She pushes her shoeless children toward her irresponsible husband in a human chain linked by outreaching arms and imploring hands; the father's hands respond in a half-hearted greeting. Greuze communicates in several, almost self-sufficient, ways: hands and arms, facial expressions, postures. Similarly, viewers could interpret the image in a variety of ways: working-class irresponsibility (and inferiority), pro-temperance, maternal dependability, or suffering caused by individuals who privilege their enjoyment over the needs of their dependents. This ambiguity, or multitude of possible interpretations, signals a modern outlook and broadened the appeal of Greuze's paintings. Greuze devised a

Figure 1.5

Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *The Drunken Cobbler*, 1782. Oil on canvas, 75 × 92 cm (29½ × 36¼ in). Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR.



pictorial language that effectively communicated on a variety of levels as well. His airy, tremulous brushwork allied him with Rococo artists like François Boucher, and his composition resembled the staging of a theatrical performance. Greuze, like most of his artist-colleagues, frequently attended plays, but he was one of the first to draw inspiration from their staging: minimal props, few figures in a shallow space parallel to the picture plane, and the protagonists' faces in profile.

"Nature makes no mistakes. Every beautiful and ugly form has its cause, and of all the beings in existence, there is not one that is not the way it should be ... It is drawing that gives form to beings; it is color that gives them life ... For a very long time, the student has copied the paintings of the teacher and has not looked at nature; that is, they have become accustomed to see through the eyes of another and lose the usage of their own. Little by little they create a technique that enslaves and that they can neither reject nor escape from; it is a chain with which they have bound their eyes, like a slave its ankles ... he who copies Greuze becomes gray and purplish; he who studies Chardin becomes true ..."

Source: Denis Diderot, "Essais sur la peinture" in *Œuvres complètes de Diderot*, vol. XIV (Beaux-arts I), Paris: Hermann, 1984, p. 353.

Enlightenment ideas also were reflected in the paintings of Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin (1699–1779), who catered to a desire for paintings describing the realities of daily life and the virtues necessary for worldly success. He painted three versions of *Blowing Soap Bubbles* (1734, Figure 1.6), which shows a boy blowing a bubble from a straw, while watched by a companion. Because of their fragility, soap bubbles often symbolized life's impermanence, although viewers certainly appreciated the artist's skill in representing transparency and a solid sense of three-dimensionality. The down-to-earth, small-scale paintings of Chardin, with their simple composition, somber palette, and moral message were similar in spirit to those produced in seventeenth-century Holland. This makes sense because it was



Figure 1.6
Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin,
Blowing Soap Bubbles, 1734.
Oil on canvas, 73 × 60 cm
(28¾ × 23½ in). Los Angeles
County Museum of Art,
Los Angeles.

there that middle-class prosperity experienced its first boom and the qualities and values required for happiness and prosperity then were similar to those advocated by radical Enlightenment thinkers in France a century later. The bubble blower also learns through personal experience and observation, practicing radical Enlightenment values that threatened the authority of church and state.

MONARCH AS MODEL

The portrait of French Queen Marie-Antoinette and her children by Elisabeth Vigée-LeBrun (1755–1842) represented a superficial exemplar of moral reform (1787, Figure 1.7); the true motivation was to improve public opinion about the Queen. Vigée-LeBrun was among the most sought after portraitists during the reign of Louis XVI. The daughter of a portraitist, Vigée-LeBrun studied first with her father, then informally with Greuze, among others. Personal connections facilitated her career. By her teens, Vigée-LeBrun was a popular portraitist among customers of her stepfather, a successful jeweler. In 1775, she married Jean-Baptiste LeBrun, whose uncle Charles was First Painter to Louis XIV and a founder of the Académie Royale; in 1779, she painted the first of many portraits of Marie-Antoinette. This royal connection secured her membership in the Académie in an atypical way, by order of the king. Her close association with the royal family made life in France dangerous during the revolutionary 1790s when Marie-Antoinette, Louis XVI, and numerous “enemies” of the state were executed. Until 1805, she lived in exile in Italy and Russia, where Catherine the Great offered her refuge.

It took a determined and unusually talented woman to succeed in eighteenth-century France. D’Angiviller defended the male domain by denying lodgings in the Louvre to women artists. All male artists had rooms there, where they lived with wives and daughters. Louis XVI made the situation even more difficult. He issued a decree in 1785 forbidding women art students access to the Louvre galleries under



To find out why Michael Fried considers *Blowing Soap Bubbles* an important example of “absorption” go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

Figure 1.7

Elisabeth Vigée-LeBrun,
*Marie-Antoinette and Her
Children*, 1787. Oil on canvas,
264 × 208 cm (8 ft 8 in × 6 ft
10 in). Chateau de Versailles,
France.



the pretense of protecting their morality. During the 1790s, the political situation for women worsened. The 1791 Constitution identified women as passive rather than active citizens, and the 1793 Convention excluded women, criminals, and the insane from political rights, and exhibition at the Salon. Still, once women artists were permitted to exhibit at the Salon following the French Revolution, they did so in increasing numbers—women composed 20 percent of exhibitors at the 1808 Salon.

In this propaganda portrait, Vigée-LeBrun decided on an informal presentation of the Queen in the role of an affectionate mother rather than as a head of state. Using the queen to embody bourgeois values was strategic in the late 1780s when social unrest was reaching a feverish pitch, state financial ruin loomed, and conflict with the privilege-protecting aristocracy prevented reform. In this performance of motherhood, Marie-Antoinette models virtuous behavior for her subjects. She appears as a nurturing mother who understood that her place was in the home and that her highest duty was the raising of her children. Vigée-LeBrun omitted details marking this mother's identity as royal, although the setting is grand and dress elegant. Her son Louis-Charles (who died of abuse and tuberculosis in 1795) points to an empty cradle, drawing attention to the recent death of his one-year-old sister, Sophie Hélène. Here, Vigée-LeBrun combines ideas of bourgeois normalcy with maternal devotion

to convey an image of the French queen as familiar and exemplary. This vision of motherhood conformed to liberal Enlightenment gender theory: in Germany, Emmanuel Kant asserted in *Anthropology* (1798) that the fundamental purpose of women was reproduction, and in France, Jean-Jacques Rousseau emphasized the nurturing, domestic tasks of motherhood as the most natural for women in his novels *Émile* (1762) and *The New Heloise* (1761). Rousseau advocated the separation of male and female spheres, identifying dependence, obedience, loyalty, and self-sacrifice as cardinal female virtues.

ERA OF CHANGE

The liberal Enlightenment's vigorous defense of existing institutions and increasingly polarized views on gender can be attributed in part to fear of change. The western world of the eighteenth century experienced far-reaching changes; it can be considered the beginning of the globalized era we now live in. Life seemed unpredictable to more people and in more ways than ever before—it was confusing, frightening, exhilarating. On the one hand scary, volatile economic, political, and social conditions offered opportunities for discovery, innovation, expansion, and improvement. Strong states thwarted looting and vandalism, thereby creating favorable conditions for trade, and laws protected acquired wealth which, in the Ottoman Empire for instance, could be confiscated at the ruler's whim. The increasingly affluent bourgeoisie provided markets for goods, and population growth allowed diversion of labor from food production, which also became more efficient due to agrarian reform.

City	1750	1800	1850	1900
Berlin	90,000	172,000	419,000	1,888,800
Birmingham	24,000	74,000	233,800	522,200
Cincinnati	—	—	115,400	325,900
Copenhagen	93,000	101,000	129,000	378,200
London	675,000	958,900	2,362,200	4,536,500
New York	22,000	79,200	696,100	3,437,200
Paris	576,000	581,000	1,053,300	2,714,100
Rome	150,000	163,000	175,000	462,800

Data Box 1: Urban Population Statistics

An important force for change was the Industrial Revolution, a term coined by French **anarchist** Auguste Blanqui in the 1820s to describe the upheaval of this period. This was especially true in Britain, where the Industrial Revolution began. There, development of an extensive system of canals combined with James Watt's improvements on the Newcomen steam engine and Abraham Darby's discovery of a cheaper way to produce industrial coke to permit the relocation of mills and factories away from natural energy sources. Britain was a particularly hospitable environment for industrial growth because coal and iron fields were situated near each other (industrial machinery was made from iron) and the proximity of the sea and waterways made transportation inexpensive. Significantly many industrial pioneers did not belong to England's state (Anglican) church, but rather to outsider dissenting groups like the Quakers (Darby was Quaker; Newcomen, Baptist; Watt, Presbyterian).

Anarchy

A political system without a governing structure in which every individual enjoys absolute liberty.

In fact, religious “dissenters,” who comprised 20 percent of the overall population, developed 50 percent of the inventions contributing to Britain’s Industrial Revolution. Also in art, many of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’ greatest innovators were also either outsiders or independently wealthy and thus free from financial concerns.

AGE OF DISCOVERY

Since the Renaissance, a gradual shift in focus occurred—away from the realm of religious faith and superstition to the logic and rationality of secular thinking. This led to increased attention to natural phenomena and their causes and a desire to understand them in a logical way. By the eighteenth century the urge to understand the workings of the world and to harness its potential for the benefit of humankind resulted in a frenzy of scientific activity. Important strides were made in the demystification of the physical laws governing nature. One reason for this is that many scientists were not university-trained professionals (most universities were religious institutions that discouraged ideas conflicting with religious dogma), but avid amateurs. Unhampered by conventional scientific thinking, amateurs formed organizations such as the Lunar Society of Birmingham to discuss ideas and perform experiments. The Lunar Society began meeting in the 1760s on the Monday night nearest a full moon, so members could find their ways home. Its founder, Matthew Boulton, was a pioneer of mass production and established a partnership with Watt to manufacture steam engines. Other members included Josiah Wedgwood, a potter, ceramics manufacturer, and Quaker; William Small, a physician; Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles and a botanist and physician; and Joseph Priestley, a chemist, Unitarian, and influential radical Enlightenment thinker who used the air-pump to teach the relationship between air and respiration.

Lunar Society members knew the portrait painter Joseph Wright (1734–97), who lived in Derby. In 1768, Wright of Derby painted *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (1768, Figure 1.8), depicting a Lunar Society member demonstrating the

Figure 1.8

Joseph Wright of Derby, *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump*, 1768. Oil on canvas, 183 × 244 cm (6 × 8 ft). The National Gallery, London.





Figure 1.9
Gavin Hamilton, *Wood and Dawkins Discovering Palmyra*, 1758. Oil on canvas, 310 × 389 cm (10 ft 2 in × 12 ft 9 in). National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.

device. Popular for their entertainment as well as scientific value, air pumps removed oxygen from a glass chamber in order to show the effects of oxygen deprivation on living creatures. While usually birds were used for such experiments, Wright of Derby's inclusion of a cockatoo is unusual. It may have alluded to the increased availability of exotic merchandise in Britain, including dark-skinned servants, whose captive vulnerability was comparable to the cockatoo's. Here, the bird flutters helplessly in what could be its final moments should the lecturer hesitate to reintroduce oxygen through a safety valve. Suspense is heightened by the nocturnal moment, with eerie illumination from the full moon without and candlelight within, as well as by the theatrical gestures and expressions of the audience. Wright of Derby emphasized varied reactions to a single event—the youngest girl watches apprehensively while her teenage companion shields her eyes, uninterested in the older man's effort to explain the scientific lesson. The young couple seems more preoccupied with romance than science, and one of the older men pays close attention while the other averts his eyes. A boy prepares to lower the cage should the cockatoo revive. Wright of Derby created an image that captured tendencies often perceived as conflicting: objective scientific knowledge and human emotion. He depicted the decisive moment—the moment of discovery and knowledge for the onlookers, and of life or death for the cockatoo—a moment of high drama with an uncertain conclusion. A century later, Impressionist artists would have a very different idea about how to represent a specific moment in time.

Gavin Hamilton's *Wood and Dawkins Discovering Palmyra* (1758, Figure 1.9) expressed the thrill of archaeological discovery. The self-funded expedition to Asia Minor by two affluent adventurers in 1751 rediscovered the ancient city of Palmyra (Tadmor, Syria). Settled by the Romans in the 1st century BCE, Palmyra became a wealthy trading center between East (Persia) and West (Rome), but declined during the Middle Ages into a sleepy desert town. Hamilton showed the duo gazing from the protective shade of an oasis toward the ancient ruins, which radiate an almost supernatural light. Robert Wood directs the viewer's attention to this forgotten

ancient site, while James Dawkins raises his hand in a theatrical gesture of surprise. Wood and Dawkins don robes over their finery—practical protection in the desert, but simultaneously evoking the togas worn by ancient Romans. Hamilton included further hints of exoticism for the painting's British audience: palm trees and an entourage of turbaned African and Arab servants. Wood and Dawkins took their documentary work seriously, publishing their on-the-spot sketches in 1753 in a limited edition volume entitled *The Ruins of Palmyra, Otherwise Called Tedmore of the Desert* that could be studied by armchair travelers and artists back home. Hamilton, a British expatriate living in Rome since 1748, operated an excavation and antiquities business in Rome that sold objects (real and fake) to eager British purchasers.

Eagerness to explore the ancient world ignited in 1737, the year excavations began at Herculaneum, and escalated in 1748 when work began at Pompeii. These excavations were financed by Carlos III (later king of Spain—see Chapter 3), who conquered southern Italy and became ruler of the Kingdom of Naples and the Two Sicilies in 1735. Both ancient cities were buried under volcanic rock since the eruption of Vesuvius in 79, an event described by eyewitness Pliny the Younger. Unlike Palmyra, Herculaneum and Pompeii, located southeast of Naples, became important tourist destinations. Almost intact homes with their colorful tiles and **fresco** paintings, everyday objects, and even petrified people and dogs, gave visitors a thrilling glimpse into the historical past.

Fresco

True fresco is a painting technique used for the decoration of walls. Powdered pigments dissolved in water are applied to wet plaster, forming a chemical bond. Fresco paintings are durable and their colors do not fade. Popular in ancient Greece and Rome, fresco painting was revived in Italy in the late fourteenth century and was popular in Italy during the Renaissance. The Sistine Chapel is painted in this technique.

GRAND TOUR

Herculaneum and Pompeii were frequently on the itinerary of the European elite who undertook a Grand Tour. They relied on guidebooks such as Thomas Nargent's *The Grand Tour* (1749) in planning their travels. For the wealthy English, by far the most numerous of Grand Tourists, the route normally included Paris, passage through the Alps, a rest stop in the Northern Italian lake district, sometimes Milan (Leonardo's *Last Supper*) and Pisa (leaning tower), then Florence (Renaissance masterpieces such as Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise*, Michelangelo's *David*, Fra Angelico's frescoes, paintings by Botticelli and others in the Uffizi Gallery, ancient treasures such as the Medici *Venus*), and finally to Rome, to explore the Renaissance and ancient worlds. Although Greece was considered the cradle of Western civilization, few ventured there, because it formed part of the hostile Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, which had annexed it in the seventeenth century.

Photography was not invented until the 1830s, and postcards were not common until the end of the nineteenth century, so drawing and painting were the primary means of recording key monuments and vistas. Because drawing was an essential part of an aristocrat's education, many Grand Tourists kept sketchbooks—visual diaries of their travels—but these were time-consuming to produce and amateurish in quality. As a result, artists like Antonio Canaletto (1697–1768) and Giovanni Panini (1691–1765) made profitable livings painting souvenirs of famous historical and cultural sites assembled with little regard for their actual locations (Figure 1.10). This souvenir includes the Marcus Aurelius equestrian monument, the lower two tiers of the Colosseum, the Pantheon, and the Egyptian obelisk located in front of St Peter's, all of which the purchaser would likely have visited. Architectural fragments litter the foreground, and the people wear classically inspired rather than contemporary dress. This image of a remote time and place served several purposes: documentation, escapism, and



Figure 1.10
Giovanni Panini, *Roman Capriccio: The Pantheon and Other Monuments*, 1735. Oil on canvas, 99 × 136 cm (39 × 53½ in). Indianapolis Museum of Art.

contemplation. In addition to recording popular tourist destinations in and around Rome, paintings like Panini's provided visual escape to a distant time and place and encouraged contemplation of the rise and fall of civilizations. Escape to distant times and places became an increasingly popular theme in the nineteenth century.

Male members of the nobility traditionally made a Grand Tour to conclude their studies before settling into adult responsibilities at home. Among them were Marie-Antoinette's brothers, Josef II (Austrian Emperor 1765–90) and Leopold II (Austrian Emperor 1790–92 (1769, Figure 1.11)). Their portrait was painted by Rome's most sought after Grand Tour portraitist, Pompeo Batoni (1708–87). With portrait prices determined by an artist's reputation and how much of the body was included (a head or bust being least expensive), this almost full-length portrait would have been relatively costly. Such portraits documented the Grand Tour—perhaps the only foreign trip of a lifetime—and often were presented to the Grand Tourist's parents or hung in the Tourist's own home (or palace) as a status symbol. Batoni devised a successful formula for these portraits: famous monuments in the background and symbolic ancient sculptures relevant to the sitter. The brothers stand indoors with a view of St Peter's. While sitters often chose ancient buildings such as the Colosseum or Pantheon, these young men asserted their status as Roman Catholic rulers by including the Pope's church. Josef's arm rests on the thigh of Roma, a female personification of the ancient city, who holds the orb of power. Josef's casual posture suggests that Austria has supplanted Rome as a world power. His dress and central placement in the painting indicated his relative status, as Austria's monarch. Josef II was an enlightened monarch who abolished serfdom (1781), increased peasant rights, and made elementary schooling compulsory for all boys and girls. He also challenged the authority of the Pope by reducing the number of clergy and monasteries and declaring marriage a civil, rather than religious, institution. Typical of Batoni's clients, the Austrian brothers selected the monuments they wanted included in their portraits, thus personalizing what was otherwise a formulaic souvenir.

Figure 1.11

Pompeo Batoni, *The Brothers Emperor Joseph II and Emperor Leopold II*, 1769. Oil on canvas, 173 × 122 cm (5 ft 8 in × 4 ft). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.



Other tourists, particularly artists and writers, had different objectives in visiting Italy. In 1787, the German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe visited his artist friend Wilhelm Tischbein (1751–1829) in Naples. We know about Goethe’s visit because he kept a journal he later published, *Italian Journey* (1816), and also because both men were avid correspondents—their letters to friends and colleagues survive in archives and libraries. In a variation on the Grand Tour portrait (Figure 1.12), Tischbein depicted Goethe along the Appian Way—a tourist destination on the outskirts of Rome—surrounded by catacombs, funerary monuments, and views of the countryside. Goethe wore a special costume for his full-length portrait—that of an artist, which identified Goethe as an admirer and connoisseur of Italian culture. His status derived not from noble birth, but from his appreciation of ancient culture and the landscape that nurtured it. On 20 December 1786, Goethe wrote: “I am convinced that my moral sense is undergoing as great a transformation as my aesthetic sense.” Goethe sits on a fragment of an obelisk dating from the reign of the Egyptian pharaoh Psammetichos II, which the Emperor Augustus had brought to Rome in the 1st century. The low **relief** fragment beside the writer depicts the recognition of Orestes by his sister Iphigenia, an appropriate subject considering Goethe was then completing his verse-play *Iphigenia on Tauris*. Sadly, Goethe never saw the finished portrait. When Goethe returned to Germany in 1787, Tischbein stayed in Naples. He worked for the British ambassador to Naples, Sir William Hamilton (no relation to Gavin). Stationed in Naples from 1764 to 1800, Hamilton amassed a huge collection

Relief

Sculptural elements projecting from a flat surface.



Figure 1.12
Johann Heinrich Wilhelm
Tischbein, *Goethe in the Roman
Campagna*, 1786–87. Oil on
canvas, 164 × 206 cm
(5 ft 4½ in × 6 ft 9 in).
Städelsches Kunstinstitut,
Frankfurt.

of ancient art. In 1791, the second volume of *The Hamilton Collection of Greek, Roman and Etruscan Vases* was published, with Tischbein's engravings—the first archaeological publication illustrated entirely with outline drawings.

ANTIQUITY BECOMES FASHIONABLE

Classical (ancient Greek and Roman) subject matter—especially history and myth—was a common subject for artists since the Renaissance. Artists recorded stories appealing to the audiences of their era—sometimes heroic and tragic, sometimes sentimental and erotic. Playful and erotic subjects were especially popular in the mid-eighteenth century among aristocratic and wealthy patrons, and a corresponding visual language, Rococo, evolved to depict them. The informal Rococo style contrasted with the somber rigidity of the academic style taught at the École Royale and used for official commissions. The Rococo flourished throughout Europe and is characterized by trivial subjects, graceful style, frothy brushwork, artificial coloring, and rejection of the rules of perspective. Rococo art inspired by new finds at Herculaneum and Pompeii became fashionable among novelty-seeking patrons uninterested in drab historical and religious subjects; Rococo classicism fused tradition (ancient myth and history) with trendiness. François Boucher (1703–70)—along with Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) and Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806)—was the leading French Rococo painter. Boucher won the Prix de Rome without studying at the École Royale, due to the support of academician François Lemoyne (1688–1737). Boucher worked as an illustrator and engraver, joined the Académie in 1731, received his first royal commission in 1735, and became director of the Gobelins tapestry factory in 1755. Boucher's *Marriage of Cupid and Psyche* (1744, Figure 1.13) exemplified the classicizing aspect of Rococo. He painted it at the request of the Marquise de Pompadour (sister

Figure 1.13

François Boucher, *Marriage of Cupid and Psyche*, 1744. Oil on canvas, 186 × 132 cm (6 ft 1¼ in × 4 ft 4 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.



of the Marquis de Marigny) the year before she became King Louis XV's official mistress (1745–50).

According to the Roman writer Apuleius, Venus, goddess of love, was jealous of the human Psyche, whose beauty and kindness charmed mortal men. She directed her son Cupid, god of love, to put a spell on Psyche so that she would only fall in love with ugly, evil men, but instead, Cupid fell in love with her. He hid Psyche in a remote palace and secretly visited her. Because Cupid wanted to conceal his identity from Psyche, he visited only at night and told her she could never see him. Curiosity got the better of her, however. One night while Cupid lay sleeping, Psyche lit a lamp and discovered her lover's identity. Awakened by a drop of lamp oil, Cupid fled. Venus discovered Psyche and punished her with a series of difficult tasks. Eventually, Cupid rescued his beloved, and Jupiter, king of the gods, sanctioned their marriage and granted Psyche immortality.

These themes of eternal youth, beauty, and love reflected Rococo taste. And Boucher's undulating lines, pastel colors, and large cast of characters typified the Rococo style. Despite its apparent frivolity, the *Marriage of Cupid and Psyche* provides insight into eighteenth-century society. The stances of Cupid and Psyche mirror one another, they are about the same height, and Boucher portrayed them with the same translucent skin and delicate features, suggesting parity between the god and the human, male and female. Indeed, in aristocratic circles intelligence, sensitivity, and taste were traits valued without regard to class, gender, or race. Boucher's painting exhibits liberal Enlightenment ideals by affirming the role of traditional authority (Jupiter) in insuring happiness, justice, and prosperity. A savvy entrepreneur, Boucher made a fortune by catering to wealthy patrons instead of seeking prestigious official commissions. This career choice did not adversely affect his official recognition: in 1765 Boucher was appointed First Painter to the king and director of the Académie Royale, the institution that presided over artistic matters in France.

While classical subjects escalated in popularity during the eighteenth century, the specific source, story, style, and technique artists chose reflected sensitivity to their

intended audiences. Boucher turned to mythology for an erotic subject whose Rococo treatment appealed to his aristocratic patron. Two decades later, Joseph-Marie Vien (1716–1809) chose an erotic subject, but one whose debt to a recently discovered ancient painting made it simultaneously trendy and traditional. Vien studied at the École Royale in Paris, and won its prestigious Prix de Rome (Rome Prize), which funded his study at the French Academy in Rome from 1744 to 1750. In Rome, Vien joined the antiquity craze and made drawings that provided the basis for paintings executed back in Paris. In 1775, Vien returned to Rome as director of the French Academy, where he remained until 1781. Vien based his best known work, *Seller of Cupids* (1763, Figure 1.14), on a wall painting from Herculaneum reproduced in the third volume of *Antiquities of Herculaneum*, published in 1762 by Carlos III (Figure 1.15). Vien's patron, the Count of Caylus, a wealthy antiquities collector, owned a copy, and Vien executed *Seller of Cupids* in 1763. Vien's subject—selling loves to women—dovetailed with contemporary aristocratic taste for erotic subjects, yet the inspiration, subject matter, and style were all classical. Vien retained elements of the Herculaneum painting: stage-like space whose back wall is parallel to the picture plane, few figures—three female figures and three winged loves—restrained expressions, static poses, minimal furnishings, and a somber palette. He did not copy the ancient work exactly, but used it as the basis for what the Académie Royale considered an original creation honoring the classical past. Vien altered the spacing, dress, and gestures of the women, and enriched the scene with archaeologically correct furnishings derived from other documentary sources—the chair, the urn and pedestal, the censer, and the box were all based on specific Roman objects unearthed in recent excavations. Thus the painting was simultaneously modern and ancient, derivative and original. *Seller of Cupids* evidences truth via archaeological accuracy, economy of expression, controlled brushwork, and an emphasis on line rather than color, that would come to mark the Neoclassical style of painting.



Figure 1.14
Joseph-Marie Vien, *Seller of Cupids*, 1763. Oil on canvas, 95 × 119 cm (37 × 46⅞ in).
Château de Fontainebleau.

Figure 1.15

Carlo Nolli, *Seller of Loves*
from *Le Pitture Antiche*
d'Ercolano e Contorni, Vol. 3,
1762. Engraving, 23 × 32 cm
(9 × 12½ in). Indiana
University Art Museum,
Bloomington, IN.

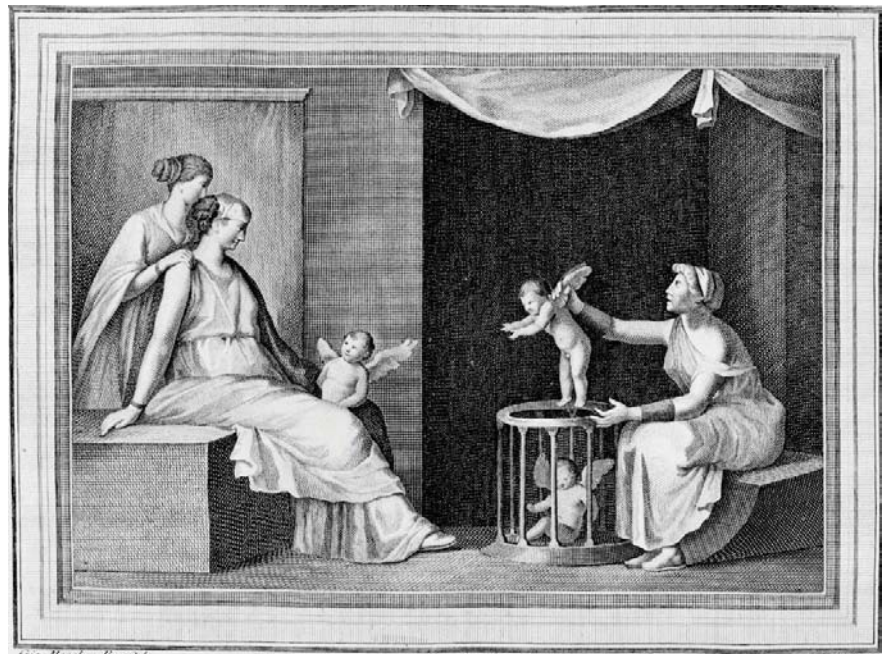


Figure 1.16

Anton Raphael Mengs,
Parnassus, 1761. Fresco, 300
× 600 cm (10 × 20ft). Villa
Albani, Rome.

NEOCLASSICAL STYLE

Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68) admired antiquity before he ever set foot in Italy, and wrote a famous essay praising Greek art, *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture* (1755). There he declared: “The generally most prominent characteristic of Greek masterpieces is a noble simplicity and a quiet grandeur in posture as well as expression. Just as the depths of the sea remain calm despite surface waves, similarly the expressions of Greek sculptures show a noble and steady soul beneath all suffering” (Winckelmann 1808: 12). Winckelmann agreed that the superiority of Greek art (which he had not yet seen) resulted from a hospitable climate and the promotion of physical fitness, with sculptors inspired by beautiful male bodies exercising outdoors in the nude. Among more recent artists, Winckelmann felt that Raphael best embodied “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur,” as evidenced by his *Sistine Madonna* (1512–14), owned by Friedrich August III, Elector of Saxony, in Dresden. In 1758, Cardinal Albani, the wealthiest and most influential of Rome’s antiquities collectors, dealers, and art patrons, hired Winckelmann as his librarian and art advisor. Winckelmann moved into the Villa Albani and catalogued the Cardinal’s collections of gems, sculpture, and decorative arts. The catalogues appeared in luxurious, illustrated editions that enhanced the Cardinal’s status, raised the value of his collections, and brought classical art to a wider audience. While technically a residence, the Villa was crammed with art-for-sale (authentic and fake) and was an essential stop on the Grand Tour.

Winckelmann became good friends with the painter Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–79). Both converted from **Lutheranism** to **Roman Catholicism**, the official religion of the Papal States, admired antiquity, and visited Rome’s ancient and Renaissance monuments together. Destined for artistic greatness by his father, court painter to the Elector of Saxony, Mengs was named after the painters Antonio Correggio and Raphael. Mengs worked first at the Spanish court in Madrid, succeeded his father as court painter in Dresden (which guaranteed him an income), and went to Rome in 1749 under the pretense of studying Renaissance art. He never returned to Germany, although his salary continued until 1756. In order to receive official commissions in Rome, Mengs applied for and was granted membership in the Academy of St Luke, an artists’ society sponsored by the pope. Mengs socialized with the German expatriate community, through which he met Winckelmann, who had worked as the Elector of Saxony’s librarian.

In 1760, Winckelmann secured an important commission for Mengs—the ceiling of the Albani villa’s grand gallery. Mengs took inspiration from antiquity in subject and composition. He called his painting *Parnassus* (1761, Figure 1.16), after the mountain home of Apollo and the Muses. This mythological subject depicts a triumphant Apollo (god of beauty, poetry, and music), accompanied by Mnemosyne (goddess of memory) and her nine daughters, the Muses (goddesses of the arts and sciences). Mengs’s conception departed drastically from typical ceiling paintings of the day. Viewers were astonished to find it designed like an easel painting. Mengs’s composition asserted the truth of the ceiling as a flat surface rather than creating the illusion that it was open to the sky, the standard treatment for ceiling paintings at that time, for instance the ceiling of Il Gesu in Rome by Giovanni Gaulli (1639–1709, Figure 1.17). As with Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel ceiling, viewers had to stand in a particular place and crane their necks back for an optimal view. Mengs followed the classical practice of depicting women clothed and men in heroic nudity, and organized his figures following the lead of Roman wall painting: in a symmetrical composition,

Lutheranism

The branch of Christianity established by Martin Luther in the early sixteenth century. It resulted from a disagreement with Roman Catholicism on several issues. Roman Catholicism was hierarchical and maintained that the Pope was the infallible authority on spiritual matters. Martin Luther asserted that the Bible was the only reliable source of spiritual guidance. Roman Catholicism invested the clergy with the authority to interpret the Bible, whereas Lutheranism asserted an individual’s ability to do so. There were three important outcomes of Lutheranism: (1) literacy (necessary for reading the Bible), (2) the Hundred Years’ War, when some rulers decided to assert their absolute authority independent of the Roman Catholic church, and (3) the belief that faith, not deeds, is the key to salvation.

Roman Catholicism

The branch of Christianity that split from Orthodox Christianity in 1054. A rigidly structured, hierarchical organization, it maintains that the Pope is ultimate earthly spiritual authority and the direct successor of the Apostle Peter.

Figure 1.17

Giovanni Gaulli, *Triumph of the Name of Jesus*, 1679. Fresco. Il Gesu, Rome.



with action in the foreground generally parallel to the picture plane, before a vista that appeared more like a theatrical backdrop than nature itself. Mengs encouraged contemporary visitors to make an analogy between Apollo and Cardinal Albani by giving Apollo the unmistakable facial features of the Cardinal and basing Mnemosyne and the Muses on the women in Albani's uncelibate life.

Artistic circles in Rome were small, and expatriate communities played a central role in cultural, intellectual, and political life. There were particularly close ties between the German and English communities, since King George II had a German mother and was born in Hannover. Gavin Hamilton, who lived in Rome from 1748 until his death in 1798, was the nucleus of expatriate artist life and knew all the other artists and writers living or visiting there, including Tischbein (1779–81; 1783–99), Winckelmann (1755–68), Mengs (1749–79), and Wiedewelt (1754–58). Danish sculptor Johannes Wiedewelt (1731–1802) was also a close friend of Winckelmann's; they met in Rome in 1756 and traveled together to Naples in 1758. Although Wiedewelt returned to Copenhagen, they corresponded for decades. Previously (1750–53), Wiedewelt studied in Paris at the École Royale (royal school of painting and sculpture), where he won a silver medal. His studies abroad were rewarded in 1759, when he was elected to the Royal Danish Academy of Arts, whose membership at the time was dominated by German artists. Infused with Winckelmannian ideas, Wiedewelt's first major work was a sepulchral monument to the recently deceased Danish King Frederik V (1723–66) at Roskilde Cathedral (1766–69, Figure 1.18), which he began in 1766. **Allegorical**

Allegory

Expression of abstract ideas through figures and symbols.



Figure 1.18
Johannes Wiedewelt, *Monument to Frederik V*, 1766–69. Marble, granite, and bronze. Roskilde Cathedral, Denmark.

figures of Peace, Prudence, Fortitude, and The Happiness of the Century described Frederik V's reign and were inspired by Greek relief sculptures in the Villa Borghese in Rome. At the base of the tomb, personifications of Denmark and Norway mourn the king's passing. The tomb embodies the simplicity, severity, grandeur, calmness, and balance Winckelmann attributed to Greek art; significantly, Wiedewelt was the first to incorporate Winckelmann's ideas into an art academy curriculum.

CALM GRANDEUR IN DANTE

Just as Wiedewelt applied Winckelmann's ideas to a royal tomb, Joshua Reynolds (1723–92) applied them to a literary subject. Reynolds was co-founder and first president of Britain's Royal Academy (RA), and in 1784 became First Painter to George III. He presented an influential series of lectures between 1769 and 1791, published as *Discourses on Art*, which set forth principles taught at the RA. Combining a



To read Wiedewelt's description of his monument go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

Figure 1.19

Joshua Reynolds, *Count Ugolino and his Children*, 1773.
Oil on canvas, 126 × 177 cm
(4 ft 1½ in × 5 ft 9½ in).
Knole, Kent.



contemporary fascination with Italy with an emerging interest in literary masterpieces, Reynolds turned to Dante Alighieri's poem *The Divine Comedy* (c. 1300) for an example of behavior exemplifying Winckelmann's ideals. The story of Ugolino is horrific yet true: wrongfully accused of treason in the late thirteenth century, Count Ugolino de la Gherardesca was imprisoned and left to starve, along with his sons and grandsons. As the days passed and the men weakened, his sons, in a gesture of filial piety, begged their father to eat them so that he might survive longer. Ugolino's refusal to flee pre-trial evidenced allegiance to institutional authority regardless of personal consequences, as did the offer of his sons. These examples of stoic virtue assumed particular significance during this era of escalating unrest.

In a history painting shown at London's 1773 RA exhibition, Reynolds depicted the nobleman reduced to a bestial level, torn between love and hunger (Figure 1.19). Despite his outward composure, Ugolino's clenched hands, furrowed brow, and wide-eyed stare hint at his psychological turmoil; a fascination with extreme states that characterizes Romanticism. Like Greuze, Reynolds set his few figures, whose feelings are clearly conveyed by gesture and expression, in a dramatically lit, bare, stage-like space. As in Wright of Derby's *Experiment*, each figure represents in posture and expression a different response to a situation. Reynolds was precocious in turning to Dante—not until 1800 did a Dante subject appear at the Paris Salon. The Duke of Dorset purchased *Ugolino* from Reynolds, and it has been in his residence at Knole Park ever since.

CONCLUSION

The Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution fostered curiosity about nature, society, institutions, human relations, and the past. Instead of relying on inherited ideas, intellectuals sought a concrete and rational understanding of phenomena based on experience and facts, initiating an age of exploration concerned with human physiognomy, psychology, and values, with natural entities and their causes and

significance, and with a desire to construct an accurate picture of ancient times. Focus on contemporary human conditions accompanied this empirical mindset, giving rise to conflicting ideas about the role of tradition and hierarchies in nature and society. Radical ideas about the inherent moral equality of humans reinforced escalating resentment among hard-working commoners toward the inherited privileges of the aristocracy, legal inequities, censorship, and religious intolerance. Increasingly, aristocrats were perceived as self-centered, immoral, lazy, and undeserving of the luxurious lifestyle provided by the sweat of others. Appropriate strategies for addressing this power imbalance engaged artists, intellectuals, monarchs, aristocrats, clergy, and commoners. For most, reform was the first choice, and classical antiquity provided models, both behavioral and compositional, for social, political, and cultural reform. The excitement surrounding the discovery of ancient sites kindled an “antiquomania” that first affected stylistic trends, but subsequently stimulated deeper reflection on the ancient past and its relevance to the modern world.

For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter, along with a chart of when various artists were in Rome, see www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.



Classical Influences and Radical Transformations

British explorers Wood and Dawkins, collector William Hamilton, and Grand Tourists generally returned from Italy to London filled with enthusiastic admiration for the classical past. They expressed this through membership in the Society of Dilettanti (a club of classical antiquity enthusiasts) and the decoration of their homes. Returning expatriate Lady Wentworth brought back works of ancient art and also Angelica Kauffmann, whose first-hand study of classical antiquity shaped her work. Antiquomania (Figure 2.1) gripped London by the 1760s, with implications both superficial—the high status of ancient culture—and profound—the emulation of “Roman” virtues such as stoicism, generosity, self-sacrifice, and patriotic obedience.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, revived interest in antiquity provided the basis for the evolution of Neoclassicism, a term coined in the late nineteenth century. While it is a useful concept for figuring out art of that time, artists were not conscious practitioners of it. One can identify a Neoclassical style, recognizable by its somber color, spare composition, and restrained brushwork; a Neoclassical subject matter identified by its use of stories and events from Greek and Roman antiquity; and a Neoclassical content that espoused “Roman” virtues. Some works combined all three aspects while others display one or two of these elements, depending on the artist’s patron or target audience.

NEOCLASSICISM IN BRITAIN

One of the earliest Neoclassical paintings—Neoclassical in message, subject, and style—was Benjamin West’s *Agrippina Landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* (Figure 2.2), commissioned in 1766 by York’s archbishop, Robert Drummond. West began as a portraitist in rural Pennsylvania; his parents were Quaker (although West joined the Anglican Church to affiliate himself with Britain’s power elite). West befriended Philadelphia’s richest man, the merchant William Allen, and accompanied Allen’s son on his Grand Tour. Arriving in Rome in 1760, West met Cardinal Albani, Batoni, Mengs, and Winckelmann, and became good friends with Gavin Hamilton, who advised him about the fortune to be made in Neoclassicism. At the end of the Seven Years’ War in 1763, West moved to London where he enjoyed a meteoric rise:



Figure 2.1
James Gillray, *A Cognoscenti Contemplating the Beauties of the Antique* from *Punch*, 1801.



Figure 2.2
Benjamin West, *Agrippina Landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus*, 1766.
Oil on canvas, 164 × 240 cm (5 ft 5 in × 7 ft 10 in).
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

George III named him Historical Painter to the King in 1772, and he succeeded Reynolds as president of the Royal Academy (which West co-founded) in 1792.

The story of Agrippina exemplified virtues Archbishop Drummond valued—loyalty, obedience to authority, and unanimity among divergent groups—significant at that time since he was trying to reconcile disagreements among various factions within the Anglican Church. When West showed *Agrippina* to George III in 1772, the king recognized a message pertinent to his difficulties with the rebellious American colonies. As told by Roman historian Tacitus in his *Annals* (c. 110), Emperor Tiberius felt threatened by his popular and successful nephew, General Germanicus, reassigned from Germany to Asia Minor, who ruled from the Roman stronghold of Antioch (Syria). Following Germanicus's dismissal of the uncooperative governor of Syria personally appointed by Tiberius, the emperor arranged for the poisoning of Germanicus in the year 19. His devoted widow, Agrippina, returned to Rome with his cremated remains, arriving first at the port of Brundisium (Brindisi), where she was greeted by grieving crowds.

In designing his composition, West selected visual references familiar to Grand Tourists. Agrippina's entourage closely resembles the processional frieze on the *Ara Pacis* (9 BCE), a sacrificial altar erected in Rome by Emperor Augustus. The Palace of Emperor Diocletian (c. 300), situated in the former Roman colony of Spalato (Split, Croatia) on the Adriatic coast, forms the backdrop. While few British had been there because its location on the Balkan Peninsula brought it under control of the Ottoman Empire, it had recently been illustrated in Robert Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia* (1764). The architectural setting has the simplicity of a theatrical set and the entourage of Agrippina seems to walk across a narrow stage parallel to the picture plane, in a manner recalling Roman art, but the large cast of characters, with a flanking figure (a Roman soldier) pointing to the main action, belonged to the ceremonial style of academic painting used to depict solemn and politically significant events.

While it extolled the loyalty of Germanicus to a deceitful ruler, *Agrippina* also celebrated a devoted wife who accompanied her husband on military campaigns, dutifully returned his ashes to Roman soil, and courageously confronted Tiberius with his paranoid betrayal of her husband. Accompanied by two of their six children (Julia Livilla and the future sadistic and insane emperor Caligula), Agrippina exemplified stoic behavior that would be equally admirable in a man: she sheds no tears nor flails about in hysterical mourning, but quietly, determinedly, and modestly pursues her objective. By the 1780s, when scientists as well as philosophers were defining male and female spheres as distinct and oppositional, such stately behavior, at least in images, became exclusively male.

Comparison of *Agrippina* with Vien's nearly contemporaneous *Seller of Cupids* (Figure 1.14), shows how artists tailored images to their patrons. Although both have classical themes and archaeologically accurate details, the erotic frivolity of Vien's subject reflected upper-class French Rococo taste, while West's, executed for a reform-minded archbishop, emphasized patriotism, obedience, and sacrifice for the good of the state.

British sculptor Thomas Banks (1735–1805) represented a different moment in the Germanicus story—his death (1773–74, Figure 2.3). After serving a seven-year apprenticeship to an ornament carver, Banks enrolled at the St Martin's Lane Academy, one of several private art academies in London. He exhibited at the Society



Figure 2.3
Thomas Banks, *Death of Germanicus*, 1773–74. Marble.
Holkham Estate.

of Arts and the Free Society of Artists, which provided exhibition opportunities for artists before Royal Academy (RA) exhibitions began in 1769. Banks became an RA member in 1785. Banks executed *Death of Germanicus* during his seven-year stay in Rome (1772–79), when he became England’s first Neoclassical sculptor. Imitating classical relief sculpture, Banks utilized marble, few figures, a shallow pictorial space, and a simple architectural setting. The purity of white marble forged a conceptual link to the perceived restraint and virtue of classical culture, and Banks’s contemporaries would have been shocked to discover (as became clear in the mid-nineteenth century) that ancient sculptures were painted in a life-like manner.

Here, Germanicus expires in heroic nudity with composure and dignity—his facial expression, like those of his companions, betrays little if any emotion. The murderer, a barbarian (non-Roman) distinguished by his beard (Romans were clean-shaven), lunges toward Germanicus, a dagger in his left hand, prepared to finish off the general, while a soldier pushes him away. Another soldier looks passively on, while a companion entwines his arm with Germanicus’s, their eyes locked in a final, non-verbal, communication. A son of Germanicus grasps his arm as if trying to detain him among the living, while the stoic Agrippina supports her expiring husband, accompanied by a pair of despondent female servants. This difference in female comportment between Agrippina and the servants evidenced linkage between social status and emotional control in the minds of Banks’s upper-class audience. Like his classical precedents, Banks relied on body language rather than facial expression to communicate emotion. His narrative embodied the “noble simplicity and calm grandeur” Winckelmann identified as hallmarks of Greek sculpture.

"Among all the works of antiquity which have escaped destruction the statue of Apollo is the highest ideal of art. The artist has constructed this work entirely on the ideal, and has employed in its structure just so much only of the material as was necessary to carry out his design and render it visible. This Apollo exceeds all other figures of him as much as the Apollo of Homer excels him whom later poets paint. His stature is loftier than that of man, and his attitude speaks of the greatness with which he is filled. An eternal spring, as in the happy fields of Elysium, clothes with the charms of youth the graceful manliness of ripened years, and plays with softness and tenderness about the proud shape of his limbs. Let thy spirit penetrate into the kingdom of incorporeal beauties, and strive to become a creator of a heavenly nature, in order that thy mind may be filled with beauties that are elevated above nature; for there is nothing mortal here, nothing which human necessities require. Neither blood-vessels nor sinews heat and stir this body, but a heavenly essence, diffusing itself like a gentle stream, seems to fill the whole contour of the figure. He has pursued the Python, against which he uses his bow for the first time; with vigorous step he has overtaken the monster and slain it. His lofty look, filled with a consciousness of power, seems to rise far above his victory, and to gaze into infinity. Scorn sits upon his lips, and his nostrils are swelling with suppressed anger, which mounts even to the proud forehead; but the peace which floats upon it in blissful calm remains undisturbed, and his eye is full of sweetness as when the Muses gathered around him seeking to embrace him. The Father of the gods in all the images of him which we have remaining, and which art venerates, does not approach so nearly the grandeur in which he manifested himself to the understanding of the divine poet, as he does here in the countenance of his son, and the individual beauties of the other deities are here as in the person of Pandora assembled together, a forehead of Jupiter, pregnant with the Goddess of Wisdom, and eyebrows the contradictions of which express their will, the grandly arched eyes of the queen of the gods, and a mouth shaped like that whose touch stirred with delight the loved Branchus. The soft hair plays about the divine head as if agitated by a gentle breeze, like the slender waving tendrils of the noble vine; it seems to be anointed with the oil of the gods, and tied by the Graces with pleasing display on the crown of his head. In the presence of this miracle of art I forget all else, and I myself take a lofty position for the purpose of looking upon it in a worthy manner."

Source: Johann Joachim Winckelmann, "The Apollo of Belvedere," from *The History of Ancient Art*, 1764 in Lorenz Eitner, *Neoclassicism and Romanticism 1750–1850*, vol. 1, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1970, pp. 18–19.

Banks and West knew Nicolas Poussin's masterpiece, *Death of Germanicus* (1628, Figure 2.4). Poussin (1594–1665) was French, but spent his entire career in Rome, surrounded by ancient and Renaissance works that influenced his style. His paintings helped establish the Académie Royale's criteria for history painting and, through prints, influenced artists striving for solemnity and dignity. Banks reversed Poussin's composition, suggesting the possibility that he was working from a print. Although Banks drastically reduced the cast of characters, he too included a thoughtful observer standing at the foot of the bed, chin resting in his hand, and, like Poussin, grouped the women and children by the head of the bed. The sorrowing female in the lower left of West's painting echoes Poussin's Agrippina, and the red-cloaked pointing soldier combines elements of two soldiers in the foreground of Poussin's painting.



Figure 2.4
Nicolas Poussin, *Death of Germanicus*, 1628. Oil on canvas, 148 × 198 cm (4 ft 10¼ in × 6 ft 6 in). Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

NEOCLASSICISM BECOMES POPULAR

While artists and connoisseurs studied classical art through prints, sculptures, and plaster casts, decorative arts played a major role in popularizing Neoclassicism among the bourgeoisie in Britain. There, Josiah Wedgwood (grandfather of Charles Darwin), devised a beautiful and inexpensive technique for reproducing linear designs on low relief, mass produced ceramics in the 1760s. Jasperware, distinguished by its colored backgrounds and white decorations, was widely collected by Britain's middle classes, imitating, within their budget, the aristocracy's passion for collecting antiquities. In his Neoclassical jasperware Wedgwood divorced images from their original contexts—the ornament of an ancient drinking cup might appear on a plate or chimney decoration—and utilized the division of labor principle, with artists such as Mengs, John Flaxman and Angelica Kauffmann designing and lesser-skilled workers manufacturing. This process combined an unorthodox eclecticism with economic pragmatism, qualities characterizing a modernist world view. The widespread circulation in Britain and abroad of Wedgwood objects inspired by Sir William Hamilton's collection (after Tischbein's engravings, Chapter 1) also enhanced the market value of the ambassador's ancient art.

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807) was an exception in the male-dominated world of art. The precocious daughter of an artist-father who encouraged her talent, Kauffmann traveled with him in 1763 from their native Switzerland to Rome, where he introduced her to Winckelmann, whose portrait she painted the following year (Kunsthaus, Zurich). Kauffmann quickly realized the fortune to be made from British clients, and she made friends among the British expatriate community, particularly Lady Wentworth, wife of the British ambassador, who brought her to London in 1766 and introduced her into high society. Kauffmann was one of the first members of the RA which, despite its title, was a private institution that did not receive state subsidies. She became friends with Queen Charlotte (wife of George III), and supplied designs

Figure 2.5

Angelica Kauffmann, *Zeuxis Selecting Models for Helen of Troy*, c. 1764. Oil on canvas, 81 × 111 cm (31 × 43 in). Brown University, Providence.



to Lunar Society member Matthew Boulton, who developed a mechanical process for producing wall painting. She enjoyed a thriving career in London specializing in both history painting and portraiture, but returned to Rome in 1781.

Kauffmann's beauty and charm were professional assets, but her ability to achieve brilliant effects within the imposed limits of academic propriety was crucial. In *Zeuxis Selecting Models for Helen of Troy* (c. 1764, Figure 2.5) she explained the principles and methods of academic history painting in the guise of an apocryphal historical event. Here, the legendary fifth-century BCE Greek painter Zeuxis (none of whose works survive) examines the five most beautiful women of Athens in order to select their most perfect physical characteristics for a painting of Helen, the beauty whose abduction ignited the Trojan War. Art academies trained artists to recognize and combine these perfect elements in an original composition anchored in traditional notions about variety, propriety, expression, clarity, and balance. Kauffmann's Zeuxis exemplifies the ideal artist, whose finely calibrated judgment will produce a work that is beautiful. Kauffmann intended *Zeuxis* as an exemplary academic painting. It combined elements associated with both Neoclassicism (classical subject, serious message, minimal setting) and the Rococo (delicate, nervous technique, elegant, pink-cheeked models).

Discrimination against women led them to pursue alternative avenues of study. Some, like Angelica Kauffmann and Elisabeth Vigée-LeBrun, were first trained by encouraging artist-fathers, but a number of established artists—Greuze, Vien, David, and Vigée-LeBrun—took women as private pupils, teaching them in gender-segregated classes. Particularly problematic for women was finding opportunities to study the nude, the key to understanding human anatomy, and a prerequisite to becoming a history painter and achieving parity with male artists. Women who could afford it (like Kauffmann) hired models privately; those who could not carefully studied sculptural nudes and the nude studies of their male colleagues.

THE ELGIN MARBLES

Antiquomania in England culminated with the acquisition of marble sculptures from Athens's Parthenon. Robert Bruce, Earl of Elgin and British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, convinced Ottoman authorities in 1801 to allow him to remove the Parthenon sculptures. Elgin was motivated by several considerations: an imperialist urge to bring cultural treasures to his home country, an altruistic impulse to make available one of the greatest monuments of Western art to British artists and public, and a desire to save the sculptures from further destruction (the **pediment** sculptures were damaged and scattered in 1687 when Venetian forces ignited the Ottoman ammunition depot situated inside the building). The Ottomans held non-Turkish artifacts in low esteem (they also allowed the removal of Egyptian art by the French and English). Greeks consider Elgin's enterprise a pillaging of national treasure and are still hoping for the sculptures' return.

Although Elgin brought the marbles to London in a series of shipments beginning in 1802, intending to give them to the government in exchange for incurred expenses, the government was not eager to acquire them. Flaxman and West testified enthusiastically on behalf of their acquisition, but the violent imagery and muscular realism of the **metope** scenes transgressed the "calm grandeur" associated with Greek art for a public accustomed to Flaxman's drawings and Wedgwood's pottery. After six years of parliamentary debate and a bid to purchase by Ludwig I of Bavaria, the sculptures were acquired in 1816 for a sum less than Elgin's expenses and installed at the British Museum, where they can be seen today.

Pediment

The uppermost, triangular area of a building's façade, often containing sculpture.

Metope

A rectangular stone panel between two triglyphs in a Doric frieze. In ancient Greece these were often carved.

HOMER ILLUSTRATIONS

The *Iliad*, an epic poem composed in the seventh century BCE and attributed to the Greek poet Homer, provided a fertile source for the acts of heroism, loyalty, and self-sacrifice sought by states to ensure stability and by reformers to encourage integrity. The story begins when the Trojan prince Paris violated rules of hospitality and abducted Helen, the beautiful wife of his host, the Spartan King Menelaus. Menelaus's brother Agamemnon led a coalition force of Greek city-states in a ten-year war against Troy in order to retrieve her.

The vogue for Homer in Britain reached its zenith with the 1793 publication of John Flaxman's illustrated edition of Homer's *Iliad*. The son of a plaster cast maker, Flaxman (1755–1826, the first professor of sculpture at the RA) entered the RA school in 1770 and began exhibiting there in 1771. At the same time, he worked as a designer for Josiah Wedgwood and designed tombs. Flaxman funded his own trip to Italy and lived in Rome from 1787 until 1794. During those years, in addition to the Homer illustrations, Flaxman produced more than 100 illustrations of Dante's *Divine Comedy* for independently wealthy Scottish collector Thomas Hope (1792). Georgiana Hare-Naylor (a pupil of Reynolds who exhibited at the 1781 RA) commissioned the Homer illustrations, which told the complicated and dramatic story through pictures alone—there was no text.

Achilles Lamenting the Death of Patroclus (Figure 2.6), shows the guilt-ridden warrior grieving the death of his best friend. Patroclus was the handsomest and bravest Greek warrior and the best friend of his cousin, Achilles, who possessed special armor made by the god Vulcan. Achilles loaned his armor to Patroclus, who was killed in battle soon afterward by the equally brave and handsome Trojan prince, Hector. Because of

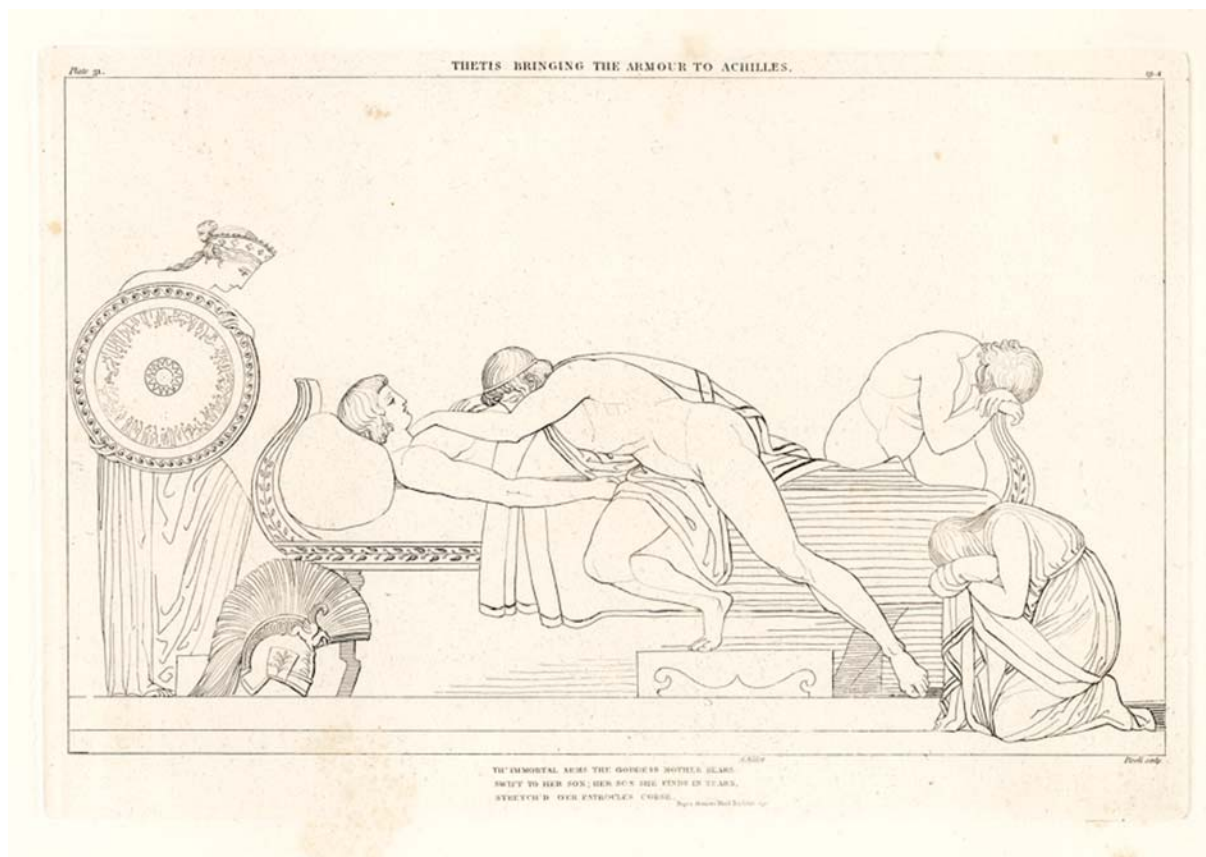


Figure 2.6
John Flaxman, *Achilles Lamenting the Death of Patroclus*, from *The Iliad of Homer*, 1793. Engraving, 17 × 25 cm (6¾ × 9¾ in).

this, Achilles felt personally responsible for Patroclus's death. Flaxman reduced the actors to only those essential to the narrative—Patroclus, Achilles, Thetis (the mother of Achilles who delivers new armor for her son which he will wear in his battle with Hector), and two anonymous mourners—one male, one female. Achilles grieves for Patroclus with body language reserved in Greek art for women mourning their male warriors, suggesting the emotional and perhaps even physical bond uniting the two heroes. Flaxman focused attention on the human drama by eliminating the setting and the potentially distracting suggestion of shading and texture.

Flaxman's Homer illustrations' expressive power and daring simplicity influenced artists as diverse as J.A.D. Ingres and William Blake (Chapter 4). Published as single sheet engravings, they reached a broad market. In a savvy effort at self-promotion during his 1802 visit to Paris, Flaxman distributed copies to France's most influential collectors and artists. For artists seeking to simplify their compositions, Flaxman's pure outlines on bare backgrounds struck a responsive chord. They suggested the revival of ancient art's simplicity and authenticity—"Pure Greek!" exclaimed Jacques-Louis David, when he first examined the Homer drawings.

Homeric subjects became increasingly popular throughout Europe in the final decades of the eighteenth century, especially among artists working in Rome. Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) painted *Funeral of Patroclus* (1778, Figure 2.7) toward the end of his first stay in Rome. David was a nephew of Boucher, but studied privately with Vien in Paris beginning in 1765, and entered the Académie Royale the following year. After four years of study, he competed for the Prix de Rome, which entitled the



Figure 2.7
Jacques-Louis David, *The Funeral of Patroclus*, 1778.
Oil on canvas, 94 × 218 cm
(3 ft 1½ in × 7 ft 2 in). National
Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

winner to a four-year scholarship to the French Academy in Rome. David failed three years in a row, succeeding on his fourth attempt in 1774; he accompanied Vien, the Academy's new director, to Rome in November 1775.

David turned to the *Iliad* in consideration of the Académie's interest in Homeric subjects; it assigned the first Prix de Rome subject from Homer in 1769: "Achilles Lamenting the Death of Patroclus." Following the death of Patroclus, Achilles avenged his cousin by killing his slayer, Hector, whose lifeless body was tied to a chariot and desecrated by being dragged three times around the city of Troy, in front of Hector's father, Priam, King of Troy. David included three related events in a simultaneous narration strategy familiar from Renaissance works such as Massaccio's *Tribute Money* (1425, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence). The central event, the immolation of Patroclus's remains on a monumental funeral pyre, is flanked by two related occurrences—the dragging of Hector (*Iliad*, Book XXIV) and the sacrifice of 12 Trojan nobles (Book XXIII). The disconsolate, if flamboyantly dressed, Achilles holds the limp corpse of his friend on the altar at center stage. Despite the message of patriotic sacrifice and the subject taken from Greek history—elements associated with academic history painting—Rococo traces emerge in David's pastel palette, confusing mass of wispy figures, multiple narratives, and complex space. Back in Paris by August 1780, David's study of Greuze, contemporary theater, and Poussin contributed to the evolution of a pictorial style whose rigor, solidity, and clarity more effectively expressed moral virtue and patriotic sacrifice.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN FRANCE

When Louis XVI became king in 1774 following the death of Louis XV, he and his ministers began to recognize the need for political reform in order to maintain social stability. One of the biggest obstacles was a legal system that protected aristocratic privilege and barred the bourgeoisie from a political voice at a time when the king relied more heavily on it for financial, military, and administrative support. Because France was an absolute monarchy, the king was ultimately responsible for all decisions, or failure to take action. England avoided this predicament because of its parliamentary monarchy, which required the House of Commons and the House of Lords to agree

on all legislation. This created a system inclined to consensus, compromise, and gradual change. Louis XVI understood the increasing instability of his regime, but the aristocracy—determined to protect its privileges at all costs—obstructed reform. Louis XVI entrusted his Directeur-Général des Bâtiments du Roi, Comte (count) d’Angiviller, with encouraging reform and allying royal interests, at least conceptually, with those of the bourgeoisie. D’Angiviller continued the policy of his predecessor, the Marquis de Marigny, to reinvigorate history painting as an effective vehicle of propaganda.

Impoverished by the Seven Years’ War (1756–63), its support of the American Revolution (1775–83), and an extravagant royal lifestyle, the French government spent half of its annual income on debt repayment during the 1770s and 1780s. Since the wealthiest groups—the aristocracy and the Roman Catholic Church—were exempt from taxes, this placed an excessive burden on the “third estate” (commoners) which resented this unfair, feudal system of privilege. The legislature, dominated by the first two estates (nobility and Church), sabotaged the king’s efforts at reform, and the fact that the third estate did not trust Louis XVI or like Marie-Antoinette made reform all but impossible. Frustrated by this impasse, the Paris populace rioted in the heat of July 1789, storming the Bastille, a fourteenth-century fortress in the city center then serving as a prison for minor offenders, although it was erroneously rumored to hold political prisoners and armaments. This marked a pivotal moment in European history because the king was challenged not by a rival monarch, but by a populace beginning to imagine itself on equal terms with its sovereign.

D’ANGIVILLER’S REFORM PROGRAM

To encourage patriotism and loyalty to the king, d’Angiviller awarded biannual commissions for eight history paintings and four life-size sculptures celebrating eminent Frenchmen in a series called Great Men of France beginning in 1774. Paintings commemorated great men and significant historical events; sculptures of noteworthy individuals were intended for display in the Grand Gallery of the Louvre, centerpiece of an envisioned public museum. D’Angiviller appointed Vien director of the French Academy in Rome and charged him with furthering reform ideals among his students. D’Angiviller recognized that the Rococo style sufficed only for private purposes and that century-old academic formulas failed to engage contemporary audiences. France needed a new style that communicated sobriety, seriousness, and patriotism. The content and composition of Greuze’s “moral painting” was suitable, as it possessed balance, restraint, simplicity, stasis, and clarity. If this strategy were used to depict inspiring historical events, an ideal official style might emerge.

ROMAN VIRTUE

To this end, d’Angiviller commissioned David to paint a scene from Book I of Livy’s *History of Rome* (c. 26 BCE). There Livy describes a border dispute between Rome and Alba in which city leaders let a proxy battle determine the resolution instead of embarking on a full-scale war. Coincidentally, triplet brothers served in the armies of both, and it was agreed that the winner of the fraternal battle would decide the outcome. The situation was complicated by the marriage of a sister of the Albans (Sabina) to Horatius, one of the Roman brothers, and the engagement of a sister



Figure 2.8
Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784. Oil on canvas, 330 × 425 cm (10 ft 10 in × 13 ft 11 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

of the Romans (Camilla) to Curiatius, one of the Albans—clearly there could be no happy conclusion. Only Horatius survived, and when his sister Camilla scolded him for killing her fiancé and cursed Rome, he killed her in a fit of rage. As a result, Horatius was condemned to death, but his life was spared after his father convinced the judges of his honorable service to Rome. David proposed a commission depicting the last scene, the father pleading for the life of his sole surviving son, which d’Angiviller approved in 1783. David, whose radical Enlightenment ideas about individual freedom resulted in contempt for institutional authority, decided without asking to do something else.

David’s *Oath of the Horatii* (1784, Figure 2.8), was executed during a ten-month-long visit to Rome with his favorite pupil, Jean-Germain Drouais (1763–88), following the latter’s victory in the 1784 Prix de Rome competition. Here, David combined the “moral painting” of Greuze with the classicism of Vien to create an *exemplum virtutis* (example of virtue) intended to inspire obedience to authority and the subordination of self-interest to a higher cause. The stage-like space, simple setting, lucid expression and gesture, and dramatic lighting of David’s figures recall Greuze (Figure 1.5). This made sense because David admired Greuze (influenced partly, perhaps, by Diderot), and both artists admired Poussin and drew inspiration from contemporary theater. David even occasionally made model stages, arranging miniature wax figures in order to arrive at an optimal composition.

David situated the father at the painting’s center to reinforce his symbolic importance. The sons, faced with the ultimate sacrifice, accept their fate with unanimous resolve, their psychological state reflected externally in the tensed muscles of their outstretched arms. Here obedience to paternal authority unites with the male citizen’s allegiance to the state, an idea popularized in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s philosophical treatise *The Social Contract* (1760). There Rousseau identified the family as the basic organizational unit of the state, with the father as supreme authority.

Since *Oath of the Horatii* belonged to d'Angiviller's reform initiative, contemporaries would, or at least should, have interpreted the father as a symbol of Louis XVI, with the brothers modeling ideal behavior for male citizens and the women, for female ones. The adaptability of symbolism was demonstrated in 1791, when the painting was exhibited at the Salon during the reign of the revolutionary National Assembly government (1789–92), which had just passed a Constitution providing for a limited monarchy and equality before the law (like the English system). Now, *Oath of the Horatii* symbolized allegiance of a nation's populace to a central authority—a message as desirable for France's new government as for the monarchy it restricted.

Like Banks, David created a symmetrical composition of male and female groups, but whereas Banks's soldiers exhibited various emotions, David's betray none. Only the women are overcome with emotion, to the extent that they wilt into despondent heaps. Camilla and Sabina lean against each other, while Sabina's friend Julia consoles the children. This uninhibited female behavior differed conspicuously from West's self-controlled Agrippina, evidencing reservations about the capacity of women to exhibit stoic behavior. This disparity between male and female behavior in *Oath of the Horatii* embodied contemporary beliefs about their dialectically opposed natures: men were intellectual, physically and mentally strong, and their proper arena was the public sphere, whereas women were emotional, weak, and their proper place was the home. Philosophers like Rousseau promoted this view, as did scientists like Pierre Cabanis, whose research indicated that women's organs were softer and more fragile than men's (*Reports on the Physical and Moral Aspects of Man*, 1802). The era's instability contributed to this assessment, with men utilizing their physical and legal ability to dominate women in order to assert control where they could. This view of gender consolidated during the course of the nineteenth century, affecting economic and social conditions.

Although David, like West and Banks, turned to Roman history for his subject, the multiple layers of meaning embedded in *Oath of the Horatii* make it more complex than its predecessors. Significantly, this scene was invented by David; neither Livy nor other historical accounts describe a pre-battle oath. Nor did Pierre Corneille's 1639 play, *Les Horaces* (The Horatii), which David saw at the Comédie Française in Paris in a 1783 production entitled *Horace Condemned*. David represented the decisive moral moment—the moment of unquestioning commitment with body and soul to a mission dictated by the state and the father, a message epitomizing liberal Enlightenment values and those of d'Angiviller. While this particular scene occurred nowhere in history or literature, the popular ballet-pantomime *Les Horaces*, written by Jean Noverre and performed in Paris in 1777, contained two relevant scenes—the sons' departure from their despondent sisters and the sons' subsequent oath to their father on the battlefield. David followed the École Royale directive to study history, literature, exemplary paintings and sculpture past and contemporary, as well as human physiognomy and everyday objects, and to judiciously assemble elements that best conveyed a particular idea. David did so in a manner contemporaries perceived as completely new. In *Oath of the Horatii* David demonstrated his erudition and originality by distilling a complicated narrative into a single, powerful symbol. With disregard for protocol, David exhibited his painting before he left Rome, where it generated discussion before its appearance at the 1785 Salon and further annoyed d'Angiviller by submitting it to the Salon late. The popular success of David's *Oath* was evidenced by the production in 1786 of a new opera entitled *Les Horaces* with a text by Nicolas



Figure 2.9
Jacques-Louis David, *Lictors Returning to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons*, 1789. Oil on canvas, 325 × 425 cm (10 ft 8 in × 13 ft 11 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Guillard and music by Antonio Salieri, Mozart's infamous rival. A critical disaster, it was restaged for Napoleon in 1800.

In the tumultuous year of 1789, the year the French Revolution began, David painted *Lictors Returning to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons* (Figure 2.9), an *exemplum virtutis* of the most absolute sort. Here, Brutus—who helped depose the tyrannical last king of Rome, Tarquin, and establish a **republican** government based on the supremacy of law and order over individual desire—awaits the return of his sons' corpses. When elected co-consul (ruler) along with Collatinus, Brutus swore an oath to uphold the laws of the Roman Republic, and his allegiance was put to the ultimate test when his sons Titus and Tiberius were convicted of the capital crime of treason for their participation in a conspiracy to restore the deposed king. Torn between paternal love and patriotic duty, Brutus subordinated his will to that of the state, a requirement for effective governance according to Rousseau's *Social Contract*.

Commissioned by d'Angiviller as part of his reformatory program, *Brutus* conveyed a political message about the necessity of rulers placing the public good over personal happiness by safeguarding the rule of law at all costs. At the same time, it symbolized a regime change from monarchical tyranny to a democratic republic, a prophetic augury of future events. David expressed the psychological torment such a commitment might entail. Brutus broods in the shadows of his home's entry hall, unable to face the mortal evidence of his harsh if mandatory decision; the females of the family, out of the public eye entirely, express the distressed emotional state Brutus so masterfully suppresses. As in the *Horatii*, David separated the male and female spheres both physically and emotionally. Although Brutus's face remains expressionless, his tense posture with crossed feet and fisted hand holding the death decree, subtly indicate his inner state; his right elbow rests on the socle of a statue of Roma, a reminder of the righteous patriotism motivating this family tragedy. The

Republican

Opponent of monarchy; advocate of a form of government by and for its citizens. Used especially to describe individuals supporting the French Revolutionary values of liberty, equality, and solidarity (liberté, égalité, fraternité).



To read David's description of Brutus go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

Figure 2.10

Heinrich Füger, *Judgment of Brutus*, 1799. Oil on canvas, 88 × 111 cm (34½ × 43½ in). Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.



right hand curling toward and pointing to his head suggests that a tempest of regret and sorrow are encased within the mind of this stoic Roman.

David executed the painting with a degree of archaeological accuracy and painstaking detail that brought the subject alive to his viewers. The posture of David's Brutus is suspiciously similar to that of Reynolds's *Ugolino* (Figure 1.19), popularized by a large print edition, engraved by John Dixon and published by John Boydell. It sold well during the 1780s at Haines's English Engraving Shop in Paris, which specialized in the sale of British prints, and there can be little doubt that David knew it. Indeed, *Ugolino* was an appropriate model for Brutus, since he too was torn between conflicting loyalties to family and state.

Ten years after David, Heinrich Füger (1751–1818) represented the Brutus story with a different pictorial approach and at a different moment, reflecting the more conservative artistic climate of the Austrian Empire (1799, Figure 2.10). Füger studied in Rome from 1776 to 1783, became court painter to Emperor Josef II in 1783, and director of Vienna's Royal Academy of Art in 1795. Despite the close connection between France and Austria (Marie-Antoinette was the sister of Josef II), Neoclassicism in Austria had a different character. It did not evidence the compositional severity or moralizing tendency of Neoclassicism in France. In Austria, political stability was reflected in cultural conservatism: there was no d'Angiviller in Vienna, nor was the Hapsburg monarchy in turmoil as was the Bourbon monarchy in France. Füger (who had painted a *Death of Germanicus* in 1789) promoted the Neoclassical style he imported from Rome, which was well suited to the expression of imperial ideals.

In *Judgment of Brutus*, Füger selected an earlier moment than David—one when Brutus made the agonizing choice to subordinate his paternal feelings to the law. The message of a ruler placing his civic duty first had particular significance during the 1790s, when Josef II endured the execution of his sister, whose marriage

to Louis XVI was arranged to strengthen ties between the two nations. Brutus, with steely resolve, points an accusing finger toward his guilty sons, one of whom seems to appeal to the heavens for mercy while the other gazes downward with resigned acceptance. Füger's composition included numerous figures, with the main characters highlighted and arranged with theatrical clarity—a compromise between the austere Neoclassicism of David and the **Baroque** style dominant at the Vienna Academy. Indeed, because of the association of David's severe Neoclassical style with anti-monarchical revolutionary ideals during the 1790s, it is plausible that, even had Füger wanted to evolve a stricter Neoclassical style, he would have avoided doing so for political reasons. In consideration of the milieu in which he worked, Füger developed an approach that combined elements of Neoclassicism—archaeological accuracy, stoic morality, clear theatrical gestures and expressions—with the familiar Baroque grandeur preferred by Austria's ruling elite.

David was the most influential person in the French art world from 1789 until 1815. He had hundreds of students, many of whom became important teachers. His paintings, widely circulated in copies and prints, inspired artists long after his death, primarily, though, in their exacting detail rather than in their moralizing subject matter. The most influential of David's students was Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), who won the Prix de Rome in 1801 based on his rendition of the designated competition subject, *The Ambassadors of Agamemnon in the Tent of Achilles* (1800, Figure 2.11), a work admired by Flaxman during his visit to the 1802 Salon (Hourticq 1928: 3). The son of a painter, Ingres studied at the art academy in Toulouse before going to Paris to study with David in 1797. Although Ingres lived much of his life in Rome, acting as director of the French Academy from 1834 to 1841, he also exhibited regularly at the Salon.

According to the specifications of the École des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts—the Académie and École Royale were reorganized and renamed during the turbulent 1790s), students should represent “the moment when the Greeks send

Baroque

The artistic style following the Renaissance and dominant in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In contrast to Renaissance art (linear, restrained, intellectual, balanced), Baroque art is typically painterly, expressive, sensual, and dramatic.



Figure 2.11

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *The Ambassadors of Agamemnon in the Tent of Achilles*, 1800. Oil on canvas, 113 × 146 cm (3 ft 8½ in × 4 ft 10½ in). École des Beaux-Arts, Paris.

ambassadors to Achilles, who had withdrawn to his tent, when they find him with Patroclus amusing himself by singing the exploits of heroes on his lyre,” a subject from Book IX of the *Iliad* (Ingres 2006: 113). War was a timely topic, since France had been at war with Europe’s monarchies since the execution of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette in 1793. Ingres depicted Achilles startled by the arrival of Ulysses and Ajax, envoys from Agamemnon, general of the Greek forces, who begged him to return to the battlefield. Executed with the archaeological accuracy, shallow space, and theatrical gestures characteristic of David, Ingres paraphrased two well-known Roman copies of Greek sculptures located in the pope’s collection at the Vatican to further impress the competition judges: *General Phocion* for Achilles (wearing the red cloak) and for Patroclus, the Capitoline *Faun*. Napoleon had confiscated the *Faun* from the papal collection in Rome and paraded it through the streets of Paris, along with other booty in a 1798 triumphal procession and subsequently exhibited it at the Louvre, where it remained until 1815. Ingres also flexed his artistic muscle by demonstrating to his teacher-judges his facility for representing the three main body types derived from antiquity: the graceful physique characterized by the sculptures of Praxiteles (fourth century BCE), the gnarly aging body found in sculpture from the Hellenistic period (third to second centuries BCE), and the virile athlete epitomized by the fifth-century BCE classical sculptures of Polykleitos.

Like David, Ingres divided his figures into two distinct groups, but instead of David’s characteristic male-female constellation, Ingres opposed the svelte, youthful bodies of the men engaged in cultural pursuits with the knotty musculature of men toughened by war. In this way, Ingres reinforced the idea that the erroneous prioritizing of private pleasure above patriotic duty had emasculating consequences, and further, that withdrawal to the domestic sphere and engagement in cultural pursuits was a feminizing, properly feminine, activity. This failure of heroes to behave heroically suggested chinks in the Neoclassical armor that widened with time.

During the course of the eighteenth century and particularly during the revolutionary period in the 1790s, women were increasingly excluded from public view and sequestered in the private realm of domesticity, indicated here by the tiny female figure peering at the viewer from the shadowy interior of Achilles’s tent. Before the Revolution, bourgeois and aristocratic French women enjoyed privileges abolished by Napoleon’s Civil Code in 1804, which was in turn based on Roman law. Ingres invests the feminized bodies of Achilles and Patroclus with positive attributes of loyalty and gentleness that West ascribed to Agrippina, indicating on the one hand the instability of identities at a time of upheaval, when norms fluctuated, and on the other, the marginalization of women. As the nineteenth century progressed, the psychological need for stability resulted in an outward reification of the oppositional understanding of gender described by Rousseau, masking a destabilizing undercurrent of professionalized eroticism (prostitution) and homosexuality, a dangerous dichotomy that the triumph of radical Enlightenment tolerance would have eliminated.

NEOCLASSICAL EROTICISM

While moralizing genre and history painting escalated in popularity in the second half of the eighteenth century, the taste for Rococo eroticism continued among the upper classes. David’s student Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson (1767–1824) catered to this clientele. Girodet studied with David from 1784 until he won the Prix de



Figure 2.12

Anne-Louis Girodet, *The Sleep of Endymion*, 1791. Oil on canvas, 198 × 261 cm (6 ft 6 in × 8 ft 6 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Rome in 1789. While in Rome, Girodet executed *The Sleep of Endymion* (1791, Figure 2.12), a hit at the 1793 Salon. Critics overlooked the obvious sensuality and praised its “poetic inventiveness” while condemning its bluish tonality as “inadequately truthful.” Nonetheless, the content is Rococo (eroticism), but the style, with its shallow space, crisply delineated objects, and brushless detail is Neoclassical.

According to mythology, the moon goddess, Selene, fell in love with the mortal shepherd Endymion. She assumed the form of a moonbeam and kissed him to sleep nightly, and at her request, Jupiter granted Endymion immortality in the form of eternal sleep. This subject occurred frequently on Roman sarcophagi and was also represented by Annibale Carracci in the late sixteenth century on a ceiling of the Farnese Palace in Rome. Like David in the *Horatii*, complete originality was a central objective of Girodet, an attitude contrary to academic principles: “The desire to do something new, something which does not give off the scent of the worker, has led me perhaps to reach beyond my strengths, but I mean to avoid plagiarism” (Crow 1995: 134). This attitude conformed to radical ideas about the sanctity of individual freedom and a reliance on imagination consistent with Romanticism. In *Endymion*, hard-edge detail combined with a mysterious, evocative use of shadow to achieve the originality for which Girodet aimed.

In a gesture unnoticed by Endymion’s sleeping dog, the playful, male Zephyr (whose name has come to mean “breeze”) brushes his toes lightly against the calf of the unconscious Endymion in an erotically charged gesture, as the Selene-beam caresses his body. Winckelmann would have admired this sensual, youthful male. While drawing from nude male models constituted an essential part of Académie training, and Prix de Rome winners were expected to send back to Paris proof of their maturing understanding of male anatomy, *Endymion* is much more than a simple nude study; it constituted the high point in France of the trend to present nude males as paragons of ideal beauty. But this ideal beauty, as presented by Girodet, had an unmistakable homoerotic aspect, at the same time as it constituted a step further than



To compare scholarly views about the erotic aspects of *Endymion* go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos



Figure 2.13
Antonio Canova, *Endymion*,
1819–22. Marble. Devonshire
Collection, Chatsworth.

Ingres's *Achilles* in banishing women; here feminine characteristics are usurped by men as well. As the public domain masculinized after 1800, such images dwindled because of their inconsistency with the perception of men as active, powerful, intellectual, and in control. As a result, nude females increasingly assumed the role of passive ideals of human beauty.

NEOCLASSICAL SCULPTURE

Despite the fact that Girodet's *Endymion* remained in the artist's collection until his death, it reached a large audience through the sale of prints. The Italian sculptor Antonio Canova (1757–1822), who probably saw the painting in the artist's Roman studio, sculpted an *Endymion* around 1820, indicative of the continuing appeal of erotic myths and the market for images of passive, effeminate youths (Figure 2.13). Canova apprenticed with a sculptor, then studied at the Accademia in Venice, which granted him membership in 1779. That year he moved to Rome as a guest of the Venetian ambassador. Canova rapidly established a reputation as Rome's premier Neoclassical sculptor, depicting classical subjects from history and myth, and working in white marble, like the ancients. A modern entrepreneur, Canova valued his independence and remained politically aloof, working for popes, rulers, and wealthy individuals.

Here, Canova omitted Zephyr, woke the dog, and modestly draped Endymion's genitals with a cape. He created a suitably sensuous surface by highly polishing Endymion's well-toned torso, evoking a hairless, oiled athlete. The figure has several possible sources of inspiration: the lithe nude on Canova's Tomb of Pope Clement XIII (1792, St Peter's, Rome), and the *Faun*, a Hellenistic Greek sculpture (c. 220 BCE) located in the collection of Rome's Barberini family since its discovery in a Roman ditch in 1625, and purchased in 1820 by Bavaria's King Ludwig I (Glyptothek, Munich). Critics also noticed a resemblance to Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* (c. 1515, Louvre) and Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus* (c. 1508, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden), works Canova certainly knew and references to which secured *Endymion* within the parameters of great art.

Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844) was Canova's chief rival and friend in Rome. He entered the Royal Danish Academy of Arts in Copenhagen at age 11, studying under Johannes Wiedewelt (Figure 1.18). Funded by an Academy scholarship, Thorvaldsen moved to Rome in 1797, where he remained, except for several short returns to Copenhagen. Thorvaldsen's studio was a meeting place for Scandinavian expatriates, and he amassed an important collection of ancient and contemporary art for which he built a museum in Copenhagen. Thorvaldsen, arguably the most consistently pure and restrained Neoclassical sculptor, depicted *Jason with the Golden Fleece* (1802, Figure 2.14), which was executed for the Copenhagen Academy as a



Figure 2.14
Bertel Thorvaldsen, *Jason with the Golden Fleece*, 1802. Marble, height: 242 cm (8 ft). Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.

demonstration of his progress. *Jason* was subsequently commissioned in a marble version by British collector Thomas Hope for a sum enabling Thorvaldsen to settle permanently in Rome. The fame of this work, on permanent exhibition in his studio, brought Thorvaldsen a flood of commissions from patrons preferring his chaste and linear style to the more sensual character of Canova's sculpture.

Although taken from Greek mythology, Jason was a relatively unusual subject at the time. Jason was the exiled prince of Iolcos in Thessaly and leader of the Argonauts. (Contemporaries might have associated the exile theme with French King Louis XVIII's exile in Warsaw at the time.) They embarked on a mission to retrieve the Golden Fleece so Jason could regain his kingdom, a mission accomplished with the help of the enchantress Medea, whom he married. Thorvaldsen modeled Jason on a Roman copy of the *Spearbearer*, originally sculpted by the classical (fifth-century BCE) sculptor Polykleitos. Jason assumes a classical, contrapposto pose, his weight supported by his straight leg. Holding the Fleece over his left arm and a sword in his right, Jason's head turns in perfect profile and its regular features emulate the pristine contours associated with Greek sculpture. While Jason would not have embarked on his adventure in the nude, it was Greek custom to represent male athletes and heroes in the nude as a symbol of their superhuman perfection.

Canova and Thorvaldsen produced many more marble sculptures than would have been possible for an artist to execute single-handedly. They accomplished this with the aid of workshop practices whose traditions can be traced to the Renaissance. The sculptor first made a sketch of the work on paper and then a small, rough study in clay (*bozzetto*). From this, he modeled a full-scale clay sculpture in all of its detail, and his assistants made a cast from this that was used to produce a finished plaster sculpture. From this, and with the help of the pointing process, where points are marked on the finished sculpture and measured and marked on a block of (usually) marble, a point-for-point copy in the desired scale could be made by assistants, who could generate as many marble 'originals' as there were orders. For important commissions, such as that by Hope, the sculptor himself would make the finishing touches.

NEOCLASSICISM IN DENMARK AND THE GERMAN STATES

David attracted an international range of private students and there was a long waiting list for the forty available places, especially in the 1790s when the Académie was reorganized. (Boucher, Ingres, and Vien also supplemented their incomes by teaching privately.) David's students returned to their homelands, along with their master's style and methods, helping to establish Neoclassicism as the first international art movement. Among these students was the German Philip von Hetsch (1758–1838). Hetsch studied at Stuttgart's Karlsschule (1771–80; professor 1787–94), and was promoted to Court Painter to the Duke of Württemberg in 1780. During the early 1780s Hetsch studied in Paris with Vien and David, whom he continued to study with in Rome (1785–87). During his second visit to Rome (1794–96), Hetsch executed *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi* (1794, Figure 2.15). Interest in the exemplary behavior of women operating within the shrinking boundaries of domesticity escalated during the heightened patriotism of the 1790s, and the most famous Roman Republican mother, Cornelia (died c. 100 BCE), was among the most frequently commemorated. She was



Figure 2.15
Philip von Hetsch, *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi*, 1794.
Oil on canvas, 112 × 136
cm (3 ft 8 in × 4 ft 5½ in).
Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

the daughter of Scipio Africanus (victor over the Carthaginian general Hannibal) and was described by Tacitus (*Dialogues*, c. 100 BCE):

For in the past each man's child, borne by a chaste mother was reared not in the room of the nursemaid who had been bought but in the bosom and embrace of his mother; it was her particular merit to supervise the home and be devoted to the children ... And the mother supervised not only the children's studies and school exercises but also their recreations and play with noteworthy integrity and modesty. It was in this way, we have learned, that Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, Aurelia, the mother of Julius Caesar, and Atia, the mother of Augustus, oversaw their upbringing and raised their distinguished sons.

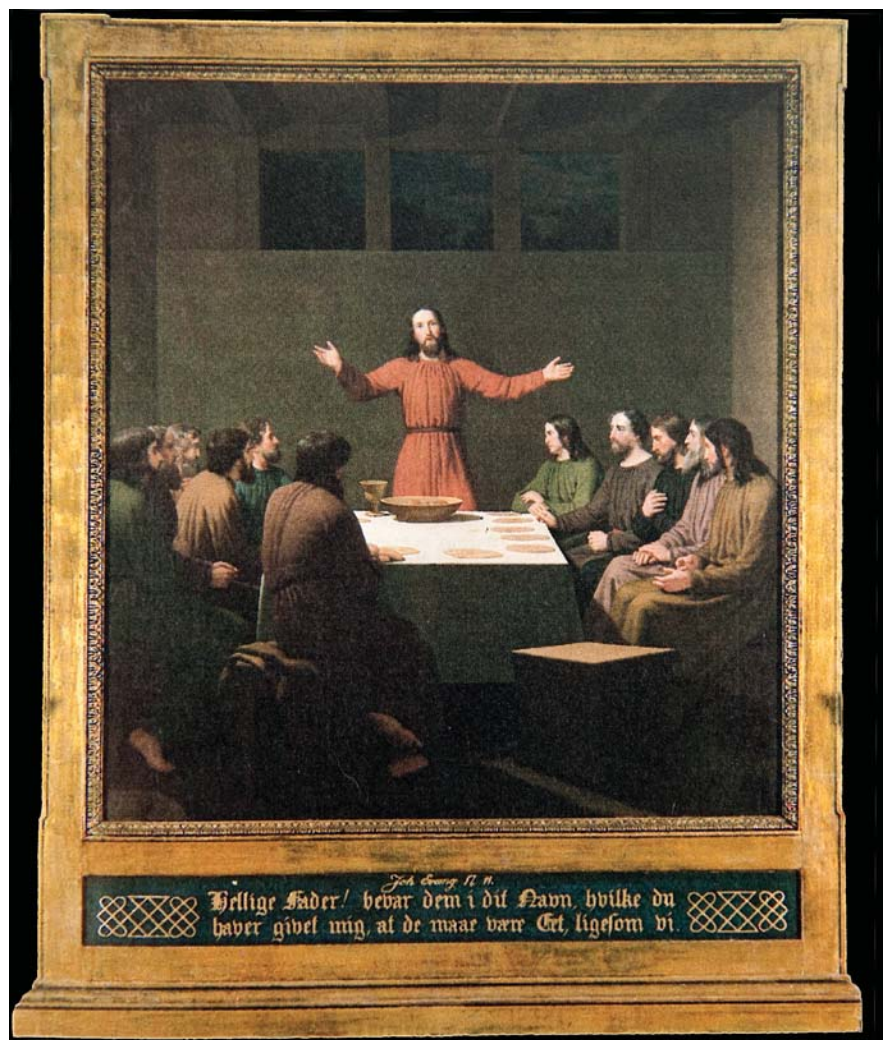
(Tacitus 2006: 117)

Just a single incident from Cornelia's life appears in art: her visit by an ostentatious Roman woman who asks to see her jewels. In response, the frugal, widowed, and virtuous Cornelia points to her two sons (both of whom were assassinated in adulthood). Although her situation was less grave than Agrippina's, Cornelia exhibited a comparable devotion to family. She provided ancient, historical confirmation of contemporary liberal social theory: a woman's greatest contribution to the nation is the production and nurturing of sons.

Hetsch's spartan, historically convincing architectural setting is peopled only by characters essential to the narrative wearing clothing inspired by Roman art. The visitor, with her elegant dress and bejeweled arms and hair, displays a necklace to the modestly dressed Cornelia. The interlocking gestures of mother and children denote a close knit, loving family. The boys' nudity suggests a vulnerability that contemporaries might well have associated with cherubs, those divine spirits depicted in religious painting, heightening the contrast between the materialistic visitor and the maternal

Figure 2.16

Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, *Last Supper*, 1839–40. Oil on canvas. Frederiksberg Church, Copenhagen.



Cornelia. Hetsch projected onto his ancient subject an elegance, grace, and refinement familiar to his aristocratic patrons. During the 1790s, a war-torn decade when citizens were asked to sacrifice for the nation, Cornelia was a particularly appropriate subject.

The historically accurate settings, precise detail, and moving examples of virtue were Neoclassical principles that could be, and were, applied to non-classical subjects. In Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg's *Last Supper* (1839–40, Figure 2.16), painted a half-century after the Danish painter studied with David, the tripartite composition, austerity, subdued palette, and masculine solemnity of the Horatii emerged in a religious context. While religious subjects occurred infrequently in Neoclassical painting, they did conform to liberal Enlightenment respect for authority and tradition: the Prix de Rome subject in 1789 (the year Girodet won) was "Joseph Recognized by His Brothers." Eckersberg (1783–1853), celebrated as the "father of Danish painting," served as a painter's apprentice before entering the Royal Danish Academy of Arts in Copenhagen in 1803. There he absorbed the principles of Winckelmann, through Nicolai Abildgaard (1743–1809), a pupil of Wiedewelt. *En route* to Rome (1813–16), Eckersberg studied with David (1811–13). When he returned to Copenhagen,

Eckersberg married the daughter of Jens Juel (Figure 7.3) and taught at the Danish Academy beginning in 1818, initiating the “Golden Age” of Danish painting.

A small Lutheran church near Copenhagen commissioned *Last Supper*, and a restrained Neoclassical style corresponded to Lutheranism’s emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. Because of Europe’s population explosion in the nineteenth century (190 million in 1800 and 390 million in 1900), numerous churches were built, and they required decoration. Eckersberg chose the decisive moment when Jesus established Christian ritual. He addresses eleven of his disciples, instructing them in the significance of Communion, when believers eat bread and drink wine in memory of his flesh and blood sacrifice. (Catholics and Orthodox Christians believed that priests had the power to perform a miracle—transubstantiation—whereby the bread and wine were literally transformed into the body and blood of Christ, but Protestants, beginning with Martin Luther in the 1510s, understood the act as a symbolic one.) In this rigidly symmetrical composition, Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus to the Romans, is absent, his stool dramatically lit by a supernatural light. The other disciples concentrate on the words of Jesus, whose arms are raised in a gesture simultaneously evoking the classical orator pose and the upcoming crucifixion. Davidian simplicity and restraint properly expressed the modest, down-to-earth attitude of Lutheran Protestantism (the state religion of Denmark), which rejected the pomp associated with Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism.

CONCLUSION

A variety of approaches to classical antiquity emerged during the final decades of the eighteenth century. The specific choice and treatment of classical subjects depended as much on the political climate in which an artist worked and on the requirements of patronage as it did on the artist’s skill, temperament, and training. Realizing a successful career as an artist was especially challenging for women. Ideas circulated among artists working in Rome and also from teacher to student: from Vien to David to Ingres, Eckersberg, and Girodet and from Wiedewelt to Thorvaldsen. Increasing numbers of art students became dissatisfied with the rigid curriculum of state-sponsored art academies and sought training that responded to their interests but did not threaten their chances for success in the studios of established artists. Despite a broadening market, escalating anti-establishment sentiments, and social unrest, history painting continued as the most prestigious category of art. Neoclassicism, however, gradually lost its appeal as the most appropriate style for history painting, particularly as artists turned their attention to the commemoration of recent events.

For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter and to see where artists lived at the Louvre go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.



Re-presenting Contemporary History

Indirect references to current circumstances through allusions to the past were increasingly perceived as inadequate. Because this was the only approach sanctioned by state art academies, artists began to stray from academic principles, sometimes resulting in the reevaluation of academic policies. And while the Neoclassical style effectively expressed the content of historical subjects in the late eighteenth century, changing audiences, expectations, and experiences required new approaches in the nineteenth. Paintings of contemporary history became weapons of political propaganda and later, beginning in the 1810s, instruments of political critique and vehicles of social reform. In devising images that glorified contemporary heroes, artists distorted truth and utilized familiar and venerable formulas that conveyed desired associations. For secular subjects, artists often turned to ancient monuments celebrating Roman emperors (Marcus Aurelius, Augustus) or gods (Apollo, Mars, Zeus). For tragic events, artists found that references to religious martyrs, particularly Jesus, evoked the proper pathos and dignity.

LEGITIMIZING CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Benjamin West's *Death of General Wolfe* (1770, Figure 3.1) demonstrated the possibility of successfully representing contemporary history. This subject was forbidden by the academic code, which considered only events suitably distant (and heroes suitably deceased)—as sufficiently momentous for artistic treatment. Part of the reason for this attitude was the perceived difficulty in reconciling historical accuracy with a sense of the moment's dignity and significance. West solved this problem while depicting an episode from the Seven Years' War (1756–63). He chose the moment during the Battle of Quebec (1759) when the mortally wounded British General James Wolfe received news of his troops' victory over the French, which resulted in the cession of Canada to Britain. While an 11-year-old event might now be considered the historical past, in the eighteenth century it was not. Conforming to the academic emphasis on truth, West strove to create a sense of “you are there” realism even though he did not witness this, or any other, battle. West designed the composition to convey a sense of authenticity, hence the inclusion of a Native American (Iroquois)—distinguished by his shaved head, feathers, and minimal dress (plausible for the “Indian summer”



Figure 3.1
Benjamin West, *Death of General Wolfe*, 1770. Oil on canvas, 151 × 213 cm (4 ft 11 in × 7 ft). National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

weather of 13 September, the day of battle), tattoos, and earring—so that viewers would recognize the locale as North America.

West adapted a compositional convention used to represent dying Christian martyrs, which conferred on this military leader the status of a secular saint. Wolfe is surrounded by 11 of his men (the number of disciples witnessing Jesus's death), several of whom are identifiable by the accuracy of their portraits, but none of whom actually participated in the Battle of Quebec. The enterprising West was paid by these men, who wanted to be remembered (even if falsely) as witnesses to this historic event. Borrowing religious pictorial conventions for the representation of secular events became a common strategy for artists striving to glorify their subject. Educated viewers would also have linked this scene to Poussin's famous *Death of Germanicus* (Figure 2.4). Although British King George III and Royal Academy (RA) president Joshua Reynolds found West's breach of academic propriety in depicting contemporary dress distasteful (both would have preferred a staging in classical dress), the *Death of General Wolfe* was favorably received by the public at the 1771 RA exhibition. Celebrating Wolfe's heroic patriotism and self-sacrifice and the British victory in North America undoubtedly facilitated the acceptance of this innovative painting.

John Trumbull (1756–1843), son of the Connecticut governor, had a freedom unknown to his continental colleagues. This was due partly to financial independence, partly to the absence of a state-sponsored academy in the United States. Regardless, Trumbull sought success via conventional means: largely self-taught, he went to London in 1780 to study with West. He returned to the US when the French Revolution broke out in 1789, but returned to London in 1794, staying until 1815. There, he enjoyed access to masterpieces of European art in British collections, and an energizing cultural scene. When he returned to New York, Trumbull was voted president of the American Academy of Fine Arts in New York (founded in 1803), a post he held from 1817 to 1835. His preference for hobnobbing with wealthy collectors, rather than working with artist-colleagues for the improvement of art education, led a group of artists to secede, precipitating the demise of the Academy in 1839.

Figure 3.2

John Trumbull, *George Washington at the Battle of Trenton*, 1792. Oil on canvas, 235 × 160 cm (7 ft 8½ in × 5 ft 3 in). Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.



Longing to achieve fame as a history painter, Trumbull planned a series documenting the American Revolution, many of whose events he had witnessed as a cartographer for the Continental Army. Trumbull painted heroic deaths, including General Warren's at Bunker Hill (near Boston) and General Montgomery's at Quebec, with compositions directly influenced by West's *Death of General Wolfe*. *George Washington at the Battle of Trenton* (Figure 3.2) was commissioned in 1792 by the Charleston, South Carolina city council, which later refused to accept the painting because they considered it more history painting than portrait. Here, the day after his famous crossing of the Delaware River, General Washington strikes the confident pose of the famous fifth-century BCE *Apollo Belvedere*, as battle rages around him. His "calm grandeur" contrasts with the temperamental steed held by an attendant. This composition echoes that of the processional frieze of the Parthenon in Athens, published in Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens* three years before Trumbull executed this painting. Washington—who visited Trumbull's studio numerous times while the artist worked on the portrait and enthusiastically approved of it—appears larger than any other object in deference to his importance. The familiar classical pose conveys an aura of symbolic unreality, a feeling reinforced by Trumbull's omission of relevant seasonal markers—cold and snow—for a battle that occurred in December. Trumbull chose a pivotal moment—the evening before the Battle of Princeton when Washington realized his troops were vastly outnumbered and there was no returning to the opposite shore. In 1806, Connecticut's Society of the Cincinnati (a social

organization formed by military officers in 1783 whose first president—1783–1799—was Washington) purchased the painting and donated it to Yale University, where a residential college was named after the artist.

This was part of a series of 13 paintings—a kind of pantheon of national heroes—Trumbull planned in honor of the 13 original states; only eight were completed. In a 1789 letter to Thomas Jefferson, Trumbull disclosed his purpose as “commemorating the great events of our country’s revolution” (Burns and Davis 2009: 104). Each painting focused on a heroic deed of a key revolutionary figure. Trumbull’s project was similar in spirit to d’Angiviller’s Great Men of France series, under production in Paris during Trumbull’s early years in London. Trumbull intended to disseminate this national mythology to the American public through the sale of engraved prints, from which he also hoped to profit financially. Since Trumbull never completed the painting series, thoughts of engraving it gradually dissipated.

PAINTING OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY IN FRANCE

Louis XVI’s appointment of d’Angiviller as Directeur-Général des Bâtiments du Roi in 1774 had important consequences for history painting. D’Angiviller’s directive to artists to develop a visual language effectively communicating patriotic ideas had unanticipated consequences. It fostered innovation that led to dramatic transformations in the goals and styles of art, for instance David’s departure from historical and literary precedent by inventing a poignant composition for *Oath of the Horatii* (Figure 2.8). It culminated a century later with artists like Odilon Redon searching for pictorial equivalents to human emotions in *The Marsh Flower: A Head Sad & Human* (Figure 13.23).

The rigid curriculum and standards of art academies, combined with the limits imposed by dependency on patronage, meant that artistic change occurred slowly in the eighteenth century. But d’Angiviller unwittingly created a fissure that generated powerful, if unexpected, results. D’Angiviller’s strategy of using art to improve the public’s attitude toward the Bourbon monarchy and to avert revolution was ambitious but unsuccessful. Economic, political, and social conditions plunged France into chaos that lasted more than a decade.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

A series of volatile coalitions ruled France between 1789 and 1799: the National Assembly (1789–91), the Legislative Assembly (1791–92), the Convention (1792–95) led by Maximilien Robespierre (1792–94), and the Directory (1795–99), eventually replaced by Napoleon’s Consulate (1799–1804). Louis XVI, while excluded from power, retained his position until January 1793, when he was guillotined (Marie-Antoinette followed in October). When it assumed power in 1789, the radical republican coalition was faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, the existence of a monarch complicated the creation of an egalitarian democracy characterized by freedom, equality, and solidarity (“*liberté, égalité, fraternité*”), but on the other, he constituted the internationally recognized, legitimate ruler of France. Following his execution, the major powers of Europe (Austria, Britain, Prussia, Russia) declared war on France, motivated partly by a desire to restore a legitimate government under the Bourbon dynasty, partly by fears that antimonarchical revolution could spread (a fear

realized in 1848). Thus, the decade of the 1790s was a volatile era, both within France and within Europe. Internal equilibrium was finally restored to an exhausted France by the 1799 Constitution, which ratified the overthrow of the Directory government by a three-man Consulate headed by the charismatic and victorious revolutionary general Napoleon Bonaparte.

May 1789	Meeting of Estates General
June 1789	Third Estate declares itself the National Assembly; Tennis Court Oath
July 1789	Storming of Bastille
August 1789	Abolition of Feudalism
June 1791	Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette flee Paris, but are recaptured
October 1791	Legislative Assembly replaces National Assembly
April 1792	France declares war on Austria
August 1792	Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette arrested
September 1792	National Convention replaces Legislative Assembly; declares France a Republic
January 1793	Louis XVI is executed
February 1793	France declares war on Britain, Spain, the Netherlands
June 1793	Radical (Jacobin) faction led by Robespierre takes control of National Convention
October 1793	Marie-Antoinette is executed
July 1794	Robespierre is executed
October 1795	Directory replaces National Convention
November 1799	Consulate is established; Napoleon takes power

Data Box 3: The French Revolution 1789–99

NEW HERO FOR A NEW REPUBLIC

David was a savvy opportunist who successfully surfed the waves of the political tide. While Louis XVI was in power, David initially concealed his anti-aristocratic, republican sentiments enough to earn royal commissions (*Oath of the Horatii* and *Brutus*, Figures 2.8 and 2.9). After 1789, he became a leader in the revolutionary regime, initiating reorganization of the Académie Royale and supervising the production of pageants and visual propaganda for the government. David pioneered contemporary history painting in France with *Tennis Court Oath* (1791, Louvre), which commemorates a decisive moment of contemporary French history. It records the moment on 20 June 1789 when Deputies of the Third Estate (elected representatives who were neither noble nor priests) vowed not to disperse until a new constitution was ratified. The *Tennis Court Oath* would have been the first painting of the French Republic, but was never completed due to the rapidly shifting political situation (some included figures were exiled or executed in the mid 1790s). David had hoped to pay for the painting by public subscription; a gift from the French people to the state, thus redefining (and democratizing) patronage.

Because of his political engagement, David did not paint much during the 1790s, but a major work from the beginning of this revolutionary decade, *Marat* (1793, Figure 3.3), is one of the most powerful tributes to friendship ever painted. Jean-Paul Marat, a Swiss doctor, became a pro-republican journalist in Paris, disseminating his egalitarian views in his newspaper, *L'Ami du Peuple* (Friend of the People). Marat



Figure 3.3

Jacques-Louis David, *Marat*, 1793. Oil on canvas, 165 × 128 cm (65 × 50 in). Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Brussels.

advocated radical penal code reforms, including 12-man juries and equal punishment for crimes regardless of social class. His outspoken views made enemies across the political spectrum and he spent periods hiding in the Parisian sewer system, which exacerbated a debilitating skin condition, relieved only by immersion in a bath of soothing salts. There, he was stabbed to death by Charlotte Corday, whom Marat did not know, but to whom he granted an audience. David orchestrated Marat's funeral, whose pomp symbolized martyrial sacrifice to a patriotic cause. While in France Marat was deified and Corday vilified; in Britain, the response was the opposite, with Marat representing violence and disorder and Corday, a champion of human rights.

With a subtext of betrayal by an untrustworthy female (Corday lied to gain an audience with Marat), David banished all hints of the erotic intrigue that might otherwise accompany the subject of a woman visiting a man in his bath; the only trace of a feminine presence is the blood-stained note from Corday that Marat holds in his weakening hand. Here, raw, masculine heroism is uncompromised by female actors, as in *Oath of the Horatii* or *Brutus*. To intensify *Marat's* emotional impact, David excluded both violence and action; an eerie silence prevails. The radical reduction of pictorial elements rivets viewer attention to the final moments of the assassinated Marat, who dies with dignity and composure. In the frozen stillness, David conveyed a compelling sense of solitude—the viewer seems to be alone with the expiring Marat, helpless to save him, arriving after the chaos and struggle to study the red bathwater,

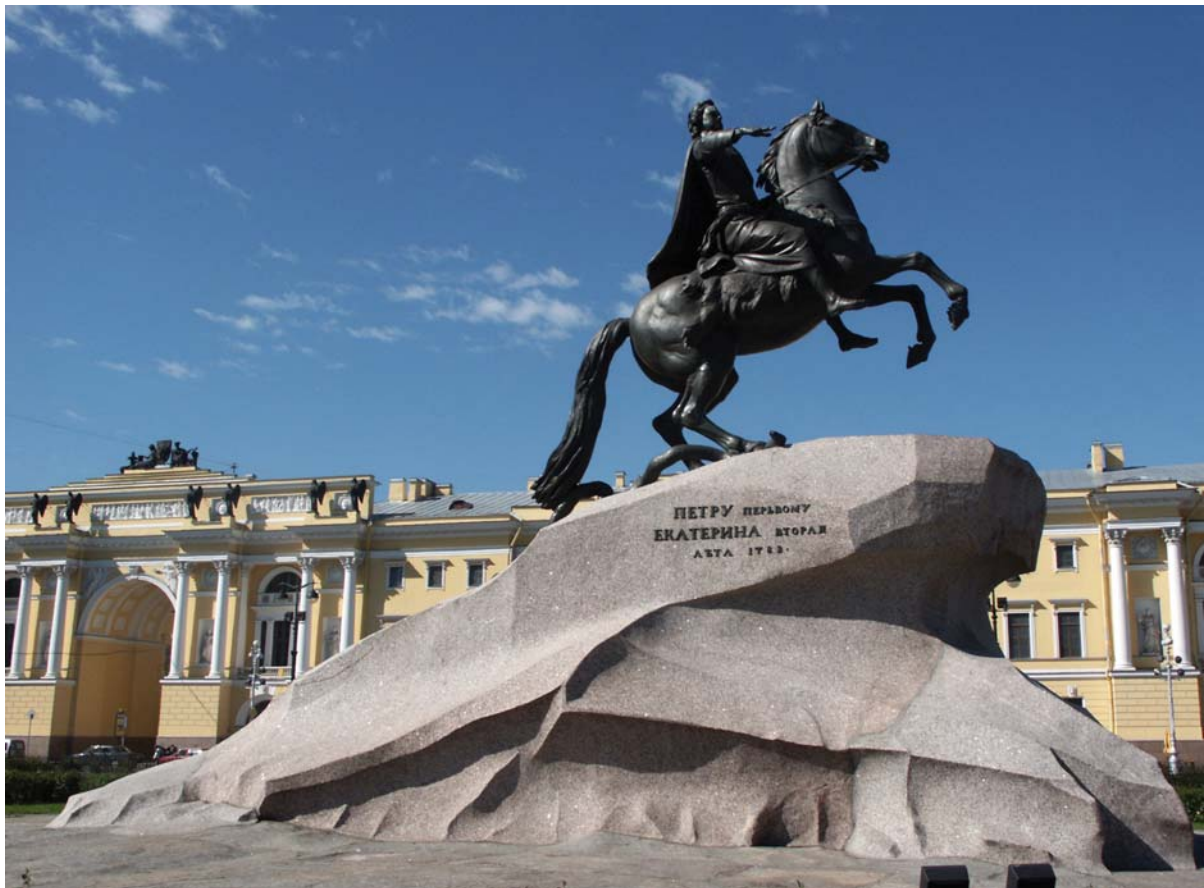


Figure 3.4

Etienne-Maurice Falconet, *Peter the Great*, 1766–82. Bronze, twice life-size. Decembrists' Square, St Petersburg, Russia.

bloody kitchen knife, and tombstone-like crate inscribed with the artist's understated tribute—"to Marat." On the crate lies Marat's note to a widow along with money he intended to send her; Marat's generosity contrasts with Corday's deception. Despite the compelling realism conveyed by precisely rendered details, the scene is staged: Marat's apartment was not this bare, David omitted unsightly signs of Marat's skin disease, and presented him in heroic nudity. The portrait, however, is otherwise accurate. David and Marat were close friends and the artist had visited Marat the day before his murder. Knowledgeable viewers would have recognized David's borrowing of Marat's limp arm from Michelangelo's Vatican *Pieta* (1499), in which Mary grieves for her son, whose lifeless body lies in her lap. Intended to elevate a French revolutionary to the level of national saint, David unleashed extraordinary creative power to produce the most arresting example of secular sainthood in the late eighteenth century.



Find out what political activist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65) thought about *Marat* at www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

EQUESTRIAN PORTRAITS: RULERS ON HORSEBACK

Ruler portraits were by definition hybrid: the likeness aspect linked them to portraiture, while the sitter's status endowed the image with historical importance. The most renowned eighteenth-century equestrian portrait was Etienne-Maurice Falconet's bronze *Peter the Great* (1766–82, Figure 3.4), commissioned by Peter's successor Catherine the Great for Decembrists' Square in St Petersburg. Falconet studied privately in Paris with the sculptor Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (1679–1731), was accepted

into the Académie Royale in 1754, exhibited regularly at the Salon, and frequently received royal commissions. He was the Marquise de Pompadour's favorite sculptor.

Peter the Great was a titanic project that took more than 12 years for Falconet and his female assistant, Marie-Anne Collot (1748–1821), to complete. Because the aging artist had failing eyesight, Collot's skill in modeling was indispensable. Surmounting a 1,350-ton granite boulder ("Thunder Rock") transported from Finland in winter over the frozen Baltic Sea, this commanding equestrian statue was a fitting monument to the tsar who oriented Russia toward the West by building a new capital, St Petersburg, on the eastern shore of the Baltic (1703). *Peter the Great* serenely commands a rearing horse, beneath whose hooves the serpent of evil is about to be crushed.

Falconet adopted the equestrian (ruler-on-horseback) formula to equate Peter's greatness with that of ancient Roman emperors. The status of equestrian portraiture can be traced to the famous second-century *Marcus Aurelius* monument on Rome's Capitoline Hill (the only surviving equestrian monument from antiquity, saved only because after the fall of the Roman Empire, people assumed it represented the first Christian emperor, Constantine). Since then, there was a steady production of equestrian monuments, with kings, emperors, noblemen, and even important military leaders having their portraits astride a horse either sculpted or painted. Falconet deviated from convention in several ways. He chose an innovative rearing pose for the horse and gave it a naturalistic character by placing it so that it appears to ascend a steep mountain. He also selected a purposely neutral cape in order to avoid associations with Roman emperors, military leaders, or even Russia. Instead, Falconet wanted to emphasize Peter's identity as "a builder, a legislator, a benefactor of his country," an Enlightenment ruler more than an absolutist conqueror (Schenker 2003: 266).

David's *Napoleon at the St Bernard Pass* (1800, Figure 3.5) is a pivotal image synthesizing the theatrical staging of Neoclassical history painting and the aggrandizing Baroque tradition of equestrian ruler portraits; its movement and drama indicate a slow shifting toward a Romantic sensibility. Like Greuze, who combined the dignity of history painting with the anonymity of genre painting, David here united two modes intended to provide the French public with a reassuring icon of control after a decade of turmoil. As in *Oath of the Horatii*, David created a fictional historical moment during the Italian campaign of 1800, when the 30-year-old general led troops through the treacherous St Bernard Pass from Switzerland to Italy *en route* to victory over the Austrians at Marengo. With an eye to historical authenticity, Napoleon wears his uniform from the Battle of Marengo and rides a fiery Arabian horse. Perhaps this is one of the Arabians received as a gift from Carlos IV of Spain, who commissioned this equestrian portrait in an effort to ingratiate himself with the seemingly unstoppable Napoleon.

Through a cleverly manipulated series of national elections, Consul Napoleon Bonaparte secured absolute power in 1802. He created an administration of men with diverse political beliefs and transformed France into a stable state that combined some of the democratic advances of the 1790s with the restitution of status, if not power, for the Catholic Church and the aristocracy and new restrictions for women. Napoleon, like d'Angiviller, recognized that a common sense of national identity was essential to a harmonious society, and he utilized art, education, and literacy to achieve it. He followed earlier rulers by employing artists to generate propaganda.

Figure 3.5

Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon at the St Bernard Pass*, 1800. Oil on canvas, 272 × 241 cm (8 ft 11 in × 7 ft 11 in). Château de Versailles.



Aware of the urgent need to establish the legitimacy of Napoleon's regime, David created a legacy for the usurper that associated him with the only two previous historical figures clever enough to lead armies over the St Bernard Pass—Charlemagne, who united Western Europe under the Holy Roman Empire in 800, and the Carthaginian general, Hannibal, who crossed the Alps with elephants during the Punic Wars with Rome in 218 BCE and fought determinedly against Roman legions for 15 years. Their names are inscribed on the rock beneath the rearing hoofs of Napoleon's steed, which he controls with the “calm grandeur” of a born leader. Here, David suggests that for Napoleon, no obstacle is insurmountable, no goal unattainable. Truth to historical fact did not really concern artists until the advent of Realism in the 1840s, and it was then that Paul Delaroche (1797–1856) candidly represented *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (1850, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool) as it actually happened, with the general astride a sure-footed, brown mule led by a local peasant. The contrast in these images demonstrates how propagandistic intentions steered the course of history painting until well into the nineteenth century and the extent to which truth can be manipulated in an image presumed documentary.

The Académie des Beaux-Arts (the post-revolutionary name of the Académie Royale, beginning in 1795) forbade the representation of contemporary history in contemporary dress. David's *Napoleon* transgressed this boundary, inaugurating a practice of artistic transgression that undermined the hegemony of the Académie over the next century. Indeed, excesses of revolution—political and industrial—led to transgressions on many fronts. The maverick character of *Napoleon* becomes clear in



Figure 3.6
 Franz Zauner, *Monument to Josef II*, 1790–1806. Bronze, over life-size. Josefsplatz, Vienna.

the context of the near-contemporary equestrian monument to Emperor Josef II of Austria as well as of earlier depictions of contemporary history in the works of West and Trumbull, who similarly aggrandized events at the expense of historical accuracy.

Austria was one of the great powers of Europe in the late eighteenth century, and its emperor, Josef II (ruled 1765–1790, brother of Marie-Antoinette), was both enlightened (he abolished serfdom in 1781, instituted taxes for the aristocracy, and permitted Christian Orthodox, Jews, and Protestants to practice their religions) and imperialistic (he tried to seize Bavaria in the 1780s). Josef II's nephew and successor, Franz II, commissioned sculptor Franz Zauner (1746–1822) to design an equestrian monument (Figure 3.6) honoring the popular reformer for the Josefsplatz, a square adjacent to the royal palace (Hofburg) in central Vienna. Zauner studied at the Royal Academy in Vienna and won a scholarship to Rome (1776–81), where he became friends with his compatriot, the painter Heinrich Füger (Figure 2.10). Beginning in 1781 Zauner taught at the Vienna Academy, serving as its director from 1806 to 1815.

Reflecting Austrian art's conservative tendencies, Zauner portrayed Josef II in the guise of a Roman emperor, in contrast to Falconet's *Peter the Great*. Josef II's toga and sandals connected the contemporary Austrian to ancient Roman emperors. Literally and figuratively on a pedestal, Josef II surveys his subjects from a superior vantage point. Bronze relief plaques mounted on the pedestal portray significant events from the Emperor's reign, instructing interested passers-by with historical narratives of Austrian imperial greatness.

Figure 3.7

Antonio Canova, *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*, 1806. Marble, over life-size. Apsley House, London.



NEOCLASSICISM MADE RIDICULOUS

Resorting to classical models was no guarantee of an ennobling result; indeed, it could have the opposite effect. While the guise of a toga-wearing Roman emperor might convey authority and dignity, the guise of a nude Greek hero could appear unflattering and ridiculous. Napoleon understandably detested the one attempt at casting him in the role of an ancient hero—Antonio Canova’s *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker* (1806, Figure 3.7). Napoleon admired the renowned Neoclassical sculptor. When he conquered Canova’s native Venice in 1797, cutting off Canova’s salary (paid by the Republic of Venice), the general wrote a flattering letter to Canova offering to replace the lost income. Although angered by Napoleon’s conquest, Canova accepted the money. In 1802, Napoleon forced Canova to come to Paris by making diplomatic threats to Pope Pius VII. Although Canova made a widely copied portrait bust of Napoleon, the emperor wanted a life-size statue. Napoleon requested one in uniform, but Canova produced a nude portrait, a decision endorsed by Napoleon’s artistic advisor, Vivant Denon. Canova left no record of his motives, but one might wonder if he wanted to embarrass the balding, paunchy emperor while remaining true to his practice of producing timeless, classically influenced sculptures. While Roman emperors were never represented in the nude, Greek heroes and gods were, and *Napoleon as Mars* (Roman god of war) is reminiscent of *The Spearbearer*, ancient copies of which existed in several Roman collections. Canova’s title can be interpreted in at

least two ways: ironic condemnation of the imperialistic war-monger, or realistic acknowledgement of military victory as the means to peace.

Despite the sculpture's aesthetic beauty, Napoleon placed it in a closet, fearful of the ridicule it might elicit. In 1815, French King Louis XVIII sold it to the British government, which in turn awarded it to General Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, in appreciation of his defeat of the French at Waterloo. Today it stands in the stairwell of Apsley House, Wellington's London residence. Although nudity in sculpture was associated with universality, antiquity, timelessness, and heroism, the reality of a nude contemporary person evoked then, as it would now, feelings of vulnerability, embarrassment, or even humor, none of which conformed to the image Napoleon wanted to project.

LEGITIMIZING BONAPARTE

Although eventually blinded by success, Napoleon was a charismatic and savvy leader in his first decade of rule (1799–1809). He instinctively understood how to maximize resources, military and artistic. In 1803, he commissioned the painter Antoine-Jean Gros (1771–1835), whom he had met in 1796, to document a controversial event from one of Napoleon's military campaigns. Gros, who committed suicide in 1835, studied with David beginning in 1785 and entered the École Royale in 1787. His father was bankrupted during the revolution, bringing an abrupt end to Gros's education and also endangering him because of his aristocratic connections. Gros departed for Italy in 1793 at the suggestion of David, who urged him to study Raphael. During his eight years in Italy, Gros followed David's advice, copying Raphael paintings and collecting his drawings. Political instability prevented Gros from getting to Rome; he stayed in northern Italy, mainly Genoa, working as a portraitist. Gros painted Napoleon's portrait when the two met in Milan in 1796, and two years later, Napoleon appointed Gros to the commission pillaging art treasures from Italy for transport to the envisioned Musée Napoléon in Paris. In a 1798 Celebration of Liberty, Napoleon mounted a Roman-style triumphal entry into Paris showcasing the stolen Italian art, which was opened to the public in a permanent exhibition in the Louvre's Gallery of Antiquities beginning in 1800. There the works remained until Canova, papal ambassador to France following the fall of Napoleon in 1815, recovered most of the plunder.

Among Gros's commissions was *Bonaparte, Commander in Chief of the Army of the Orient, at the Moment He Touched a Pestilential Tumor in the Hospital of Jaffa* (1804, Figure 3.8), commemorating the controversial Egyptian campaign of 1799. The bubonic plague (common in the Middle East, but rare in Europe) broke out among Napoleon's troops as they moved from Egypt, through Syria, to the port of Jaffa, in present-day Israel. In an effort to maintain discipline and morale, Napoleon ordered officers to lie about the contagious outbreak, which Napoleon publicly attributed to cowardice. At the same time, sanitary conditions were improved and contaminated clothing and property burned. In Jaffa, the plague spread to Muslims holding the garrison, all 2,500 of whom Napoleon had executed, despite his promise for clemency in exchange for capitulation. Chief army physician Dr Desgenettes (standing between Napoleon and the sick man he touches) set up a hospital (which Gros imaginatively relocated to a mosque), which Napoleon visited in a ceremonious display of compassion and bravery. Gros depicted the moment when Napoleon fearlessly touched the lanced, plague-infected boil of a victim in an effort to reassure his troops. This was

Figure 3.8

Antoine-Jean Gros, *Napoleon in the Pesthouse at Jaffa*, 1804. Oil on canvas, 532 × 720 cm (17 ft 5 in × 23 ft 6 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.



a dangerous deed, but one the superhuman Napoleon survived. Gros lauded this exemplary behavior and Christ-like compassion in a large-scale painting exhibited at the 1804 Salon. Unlike West's *Death of Wolfe*, the exotic setting, and even some of the characters in *Jaffa* were fairly accurate, and the event did take place, even if not directly witnessed by Gros. The rationale for selecting this event, however, was to neutralize a British rumor that Napoleon ordered the poisoning of French plague victims. Taking a cue from West and David, Gros employed familiar religious formulas for Christ healing that lent solemnity and importance to Napoleon's action. Grand Tourists may even have recognized the resemblance to Raphael's tapestry *Healing of the Lame Man* (1516) in the Sistine Chapel.

While Napoleon commands the compositional and conceptual center of this image and it represents a great deed, the expanding cast of characters and pictorial complexity drifts decisively away from the austere reduction of Neoclassicism. Although initially drawn to Napoleon's action, the viewer's eye soon wanders to other episodes of the drama, where suffering, desperation, fear, hopelessness (subjects typically explored in Romanticism), and kindness occur on a more individual scale. This, however, was not Gros's initial idea for the painting. In addition to numerous studies for figures and setting, Gros made sketches with various compositional ideas, standard practice at the time, finally settling on one emphasizing the drama of suffering and death and the difference between the doomed Arab realm on the lower left, and the light-bathed European realm on the right. The victory of European Christians is signified by the French flag flying from the ramparts in the central pointed (Gothic-Christian) arch, and the cross surmounting a minaret seen through the pointed arch beside it. Like David, Gros created a compelling sense of realism with minutely painted details that would have seemed extremely realistic, particularly in the era preceding photography.

Napoleon's desire to have his deeds glorified and publicized outweighed academic taboos against painting contemporary history; critics and academicians soon stopped questioning the validity of representing recent events. Gros imported



Figure 3.9

Antoine-Jean Gros, *Battle of Eylau*, 1808. Oil on canvas, 521 × 784 cm (17 ft 1 in × 25 ft 9 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

elements of Baroque ceremony and infused scenes with dramatic visual effects that anticipated Romanticism. He commemorated valiant battles of Napoleonic generals including Murat at Aboukir (1806, Versailles). *Battle of Eylau* (1808, Figure 3.9), depicted a battle that claimed more than 50,000 lives on the fields near Königsberg, Prussia (now Kaliningrad, Russia). This indecisive confrontation between Napoleon and the armies of Prussia and Russia occurred in February 1807, following the French conquest of Berlin. A blinding snowstorm and huge casualties caused the Russians to withdraw, leaving the field to the French. In an attempt to ameliorate bad publicity and boost troop morale, Napoleon ordered a competition for a painting depicting “the day after the Battle of Eylau, [when] the Emperor, in visiting the battlefield, was filled with horror and compassion at the sight of the spectacle. His Majesty ordered aid for the wounded Russians. Moved by the humanity of the conqueror, a young Lithuanian expressed his gratitude with an enthusiastic voice. In the distance one sees the French troops camped on the battlefield at the moment when his Majesty was reviewing his troops” (Lemonnier 1905: 37–8).

Gros won the competition. Here, a confident Napoleon, dressed in a fur-lined velvet coat and astride one of Carlos IV’s Arabian horses, raises his hand in a Christ-like blessing to the enemies’ battered and wounded troops, the survivors of the frozen carnage in the foreground. Despite the large cast of characters, Gros made Napoleon the focus through costume, composition, and lighting. As in battle scenes from ancient times (the *Alexander Mosaic*, for instance), the victor moves toward the right. As in *Pesthouse at Jaffa*, the force of civilization is symbolically light, whereas the enemy moves toward the left and appears symbolically dark, sinister, and therefore deserving of conquest. Gros’s Napoleonic propaganda images were hybrid creations, syntheses of dynamism and control, power and grace, emotion and intellect, real and ideal that transgressed the boundaries of Neoclassicism and possessed characteristics of Romanticism. His innovative approach involved rejecting classical art as a model, instead turning to the Italian Renaissance. In *Eylau*, Gros made compositional quotations from Giulio Romano’s stucco frieze in the Palazzo del Te (1526–34, Mantua, Italy), known at the time through engravings and plaster copies in the Louvre.



To find out how Gros incorporated references to Rome in *Eylau* go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos



Figure 3.10

Théodore Géricault, *Wounded Cuirassier Leaving the Field of Battle*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 353 × 294 cm (11 ft 7 in × 9 ft 8 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

TRANSGRESSIVE HISTORY PAINTING

While artists steadily produced images aggrandizing the accomplishments of Napoleon even beyond his final defeat by coalition forces led by Wellington and Gebhard von Blücher in 1815, Théodore Géricault (1791–1824) turned to a purposefully neglected, unglamorous aspect of war in *Wounded Cuirassier Leaving the Field of Battle* (Figure 3.10), exhibited at the 1814 Salon. Géricault differs from artists discussed thus far because he was both financially independent and mostly self-taught. He studied briefly with several artists, but learned most from copying looted masterpieces in the Musée Napoléon. Géricault's free-spirited individualism predisposed him to the modernist innovation for which he is remembered.

Intended as a pendant (companion) to the optimistic *Charging Chasseur* (1812, Louvre), first exhibited at the 1812 Salon just months before Napoleon's humiliating retreat from Russia, *Wounded Cuirassier* symbolized a defeated emperor and nation. Significantly, these two paintings were the only Napoleonic subjects exhibited when the 1814 Salon opened, shortly after the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty to France's throne. Géricault's wealth enabled him to register disapproval of the monarchy and risk official disapproval. In this innovative and unprecedented work Géricault seems to have isolated and monumentalized one of the anonymous sufferers in a Gros battle painting. Academic convention stipulated that historical paintings of individuals represent famous people and important deeds, but Géricault did neither. Not only did

he undermine the heroic intentions of history painting, but he utilized them to elevate individual suffering to universal significance.

Here a Napoleonic cavalry officer, clearly identifiable by his uniform, hobbles down a slippery slope using his saber as a crutch. He may be a survivor of the horrific Battle of the Nations near Leipzig (October 1813), where 130,000 combatants were killed in one day, as the combined armies of Austria, Prussia, and Russia engaged the weary French survivors from the Russian campaign. The officer's weakness, uncertainty, and anxious over-the-shoulder glance contrasts with his robust, prancing horse, which, deprived of human dominance, loses its footing. In contrast to David's *Napoleon*, man no longer commands the forces of nature; Géricault signals the soldier's disintegrating control by depicting him holding only half of the reins—insufficient to restrain the animal should it decide to bolt. While Géricault portrayed a believable if imaginary situation, the cavalryman's anonymity enabled him to function as a symbol for the individual suffering of thousands on the battlefield and for the demoralized and weakened state of Napoleon's military machine following steady defeats beginning with the disastrous Russian campaign of 1812–13.

Géricault transgressed academic boundaries in other ways as well. As David did in *Marat*, Géricault concentrated on a moment of individual suffering, but with the crucial difference that his subject was anonymous. This was an important issue at the time, and throughout the nineteenth century, because audiences expected clarity—they expected to understand who they were looking at (at least in an artwork consisting of a single person) and what the actor was doing. Viewers judged an artist's skill partly on his ability to successfully communicate; confusion was tantamount to failure. Neoclassical painting expressed order and stability through action occurring parallel to the picture plane and to the lower edge of the canvas; here, diagonal ground and action suggests movement literally and figuratively down a slippery slope. This contrasts with David's *Napoleon*, in which diagonal movement indicates dynamism and progress. Napoleon appears to have nature and his own emotions under the strict control of a rational intellect, whereas the cavalryman seems fearful and confused, factors contributing to or resulting from his defeat. Another seemingly insignificant element, but one which had important implications, is the cavalryman's gaze beyond the parameters of the picture. At what is he looking? Is he being pursued? Is he deserting his comrades? Unlike many earlier academic, and all true Neoclassical, paintings, the narrative is not self-contained. To answer these questions viewers must look beyond the picture frame, an act implying continuity between pictorial space and real space. Here, Géricault boldly integrated the spaces of art and life, an achievement whose full significance would not be realized until the twentieth century.

Géricault seemed fascinated by the role of anonymous individuals in historical events, a subject academics considered unworthy of artistic attention. Géricault exhibited his masterpiece, *Raft of the Medusa* (Figure 3.11), at the 1819 Salon with the title *Scene of Shipwreck*. In it he explored on a monumental scale one of the most horrific scandals of his time: the reckless grounding by an incompetent and arrogant captain of a ship carrying almost 400 passengers. The details of the event were well known because the ship's engineer and doctor wrote an account, published in 1817: *Shipwreck of the Frigate Medusa, part of the Expedition to Senegal in 1816*. The *Medusa* was one of four ships *en route* to the new colony of Senegal (acquired from Britain at the 1815 Congress of Vienna), along with 200 settlers and the governor, Julien-Désiré Schœlcher. The ship's captain, Hugues Duroy de Chaumereys, was politically

Figure 3.11

Théodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa*, 1818–19. Oil on canvas, 491 × 716 cm (16 ft 1 3/8 in × 23 ft 5 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.



appointed, and had never commanded a ship, much less a fleet. His ship, *Medusa*, ran aground four miles off the African coast, and the captain and governor were among the first escaping on the insufficient number of lifeboats, instead of going down with the ship, as was expected. The engineer designed a large raft (20 × 7 meters.) to hold the remaining 150 passengers. They had no compass, oars, rudder, blankets, or food, and stood up to their waists in seawater. Fighting broke out on the overburdened raft on the first night, and by morning, 130 survivors remained. Fighting and starvation led to death and cannibalism. When the raft was serendipitously discovered by the *Argus* on its way to retrieve the gold aboard the *Medusa* two weeks later, there were 15 survivors, five of whom died shortly after their rescue.

The diligence with which Géricault proceeded in truthfully depicting the terrible event complied with academic procedure. He read all available accounts of the tragedy, made numerous compositional and portrait sketches, hired the engineer Alexandre Corréard to draw a plan and make a scale model of the raft, and interviewed both him and Henri Savigny, the ship's physician. Géricault considered a number of possible events to represent, including the mutiny (the earliest bloodbath on the raft), cannibalism, and the raft sighted by the *Argus*, finally settling for the very first sighting of the *Argus*. Rather than choosing an episode of bestial violence or prayers answered, he settled on the most ambiguous and psychologically distressing moment—when the shipwrecked strain to attract the attention of their sister ship on the distant horizon, but are unsure whether anyone from the ship sees them. Count O'Mahoney, writing for *Le Conservateur*, expressed the opinion of many when he exclaimed "What a hideous spectacle, but what a beautiful picture!" Another critic offered encouragement to the young artist: "Courage, M. Géricault! Try to moderate an enthusiasm which might carry you too far. Being a colorist by instinct, try to become one in practice; being still an imperfect draughtsman, study the art of David and Girodet" (Eitner 1972: 58–9).

French visitors to the 1819 Salon also judged the painting according to their political sympathies. Supporters of Bourbon King Louis XVIII (the brother of Louis XVI) found the painting a disgusting and pointless aggrandizement of human suffering. Those either loyal to Napoleon or to revolutionary republican ideals



What did Ingres think about *Raft of the Medusa*? Find out at www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

praised its honest unmasking of the dangerous consequences of political nepotism. Géricault's impressive achievement was recognized by the *Raft*'s being awarded a gold medal, but in the category of genre painting, not history painting. This reflected the return of a more conservative attitude about appropriate criteria for history painting following the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1814. In an effort to recoup his expenses, the entrepreneurial Géricault took *Raft* to London in 1820 and exhibited the enormous (5 × 7 meter) painting in Egyptian Hall. More than 40,000 visitors paid admission to see it. In a 12 June 1820 review, *The Globe* critic commented: "It is the very countenance of Ugolino's despair, which Reynolds portrayed" (Figure 1.19), referring perhaps to the self-entwined figure on the lower left, whom Géricault borrowed from Michelangelo's despairing self-portrait in the Sistine Chapel *Last Judgment* (1536–41).

Géricault conformed to tradition in his working method, aspiration to produce a large-scale history painting, choice of subject (shipwrecks had been popular subjects since the seventeenth century), and quoting from old masters: he included a compositional pyramid recalling the Madonnas of Raphael. At the same time, Géricault violated tradition by monumentalizing an ignoble episode of human suffering that was not intended to inspire virtuous behavior. In his effort to effectively express his ideas Géricault experimented with materials, adding bitumen (the main ingredient in asphalt) to his paint. A chemically unstable substance, bitumen had the unforeseen and unfortunate effect of darkening the entire canvas in a gradual process that cannot be reversed. This strategy of combining elements of tradition (motivated partly by aesthetic choice, partly by a desire for critical acceptance) with innovation (sometimes alienating critics and public in the process) exemplified an independent, modernist outlook characteristic of the nineteenth century's great artists.

REPRESENTING REPUBLICAN VALUES

Géricault's younger colleague Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) recognized the magnitude of Géricault's achievement in the *Raft* (he posed for the face-down figure whose arm rests on the foreground plank), and seems to have addressed it in his debut at the 1822 Salon. Delacroix (along with Géricault) studied briefly in the studio of David's pupil Pierre Guérin (1774–1833), at the École des Beaux-Arts (successor to the École Royale), and made copies of masterpieces in the Louvre. He exhibited regularly at the Salon and painted works aimed at a growing art market as well as royal commissions for King Louis-Philippe in the 1830s. Delacroix exerted an enormous influence on younger artists including Édouard Manet (Figure 11.6, 11.10) and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (Figure 13.1), and his diaries and letters provide insight into his life and ideas.

As in Géricault's *Raft*, Delacroix opted in *Barque of Dante* (Figure 3.12) for a stormy sea scene, but evidenced the conservative approach of an artist striving for official acceptance by turning to a literary source, Dante, for his subject. Just as mythology offered something for everyone—from the playfully erotic to the heroically tragic—so Dante's *Divine Comedy* contained stories spanning an emotional range from the stoic (Reynolds's *Ugolino*, Figure 1.19) to the histrionic. *Barque of Dante* depicts the episode in which the ancient Roman poet Virgil accompanies Dante in a boat guided by Phlegyas across the river Styx, where the damned suffer the terrifying experience of drowning for eternity. The two poets watch in horror the torment to insanity of desperate souls, several of whom seek relief in vain by trying to board

Figure 3.12

Eugène Delacroix, *Barque of Dante*, 1822. Oil on canvas, 188 × 241 cm (6 ft 2 in × 7 ft 11 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.



the boat of the living. In an apocalyptic landscape of burning cities and stormy seas, Delacroix combined the demands of academic history painting with a penchant for dramatic turmoil. Adolphe Thiers, critic for the *Constitutionnel*, commented in his 11 May 1822 review: “I find in it a wild power, a passionate, spontaneous intensity that is transported by its own momentum.”

Delacroix conformed to academic principles in his working method (many preparatory sketches), literary subject (Dante was popular in Britain, but relatively unfamiliar in France), in demonstrating his skill in representing the nude, in organizing his figures parallel to both the picture plane and bottom edge of the painting, and in utilizing gesture to lucidly communicate his subjects’ states of mind. However, *Barque of Dante* deviated from academic norms in its indistinct setting, portrayal of extreme emotional and physical states without a clear purpose, and its loose, expressive brushwork. In *Barque of Dante*, Delacroix successfully balanced his own impulses with academic expectations, demonstrated by the fact that the French government purchased the painting, a great honor for a first time Salon exhibitor.

Inspired by the July Revolution of 1830, Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People* (Figure 3.13) memorialized a historical event shortly after its occurrence: the final overthrow of the Bourbons. When Louis XVIII died in 1824, his ultra-reactionary brother, Charles X, came to power. Louis XVIII recognized that political stability and social harmony required the preservation of some revolutionary reforms and continued restrictions on the Catholic Church and aristocracy. Charles X, on the other hand, disbanded the National Guard (composed mainly of patriotic, middle-class volunteers), reinstated the death penalty for “sacrilegious” acts, suspended freedom of the press, dissolved the democratically elected Chamber of Deputies, and endorsed the passage of a bill monetarily compensating aristocrats for property confiscated during the revolutionary and Napoleonic eras. Poor harvests and escalating unemployment exacerbated a fragile situation. In July 1830, Parisian newspaper workers led a protest that ended with the killing of several hundred by royal troops and the abdication



Compare the opinions of critics who saw *Barque* at the 1822 Salon and the 1855 Exposition universelle at www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

of Charles X. He was replaced on the throne by the Duke d'Orléans (King Louis-Philippe), an aristocrat professing democratic beliefs.

Delacroix created a rousing image of democratic heroism, whose image has since been used to endorse everything from beer to language reform. Louis-Philippe purchased *Liberty* from the Salon of 1831, in part to convince the public of his (French) republican ideals. Here, Delacroix met the challenge of Géricault's *Raffi*. *Liberty*'s triangular composition also has an up- and rightward trajectory (but forward rather than receding) and anchors its adrenalin-powered activists with a baseline of pathos-inducing suffering and death. While aspects of the painting have their basis in fact—individuals portrayed, barricades and architecture (the twin towers of Notre Dame appear in the right background), and even the narrative—the artist assembled them to create an emblematic moment encapsulating the spirit and significance of the July Revolution, with popular forces triumphing over an oppressive monarchy.

Delacroix began with a dramatic story then circulating about a laundress who, upon discovering her younger brother's bullet-ridden body, attacked the Swiss Guard before being killed herself. Grasping the tricolore—the blue, white, and red flag of the French Revolution (the royal flag was white)—in one hand and a bayoneted rifle in the other, Liberty leads a heterogeneous assortment of rebels, clearly identifiable by their clothing: urban factory workers (man with saber), rural workers (blue-jacketed man), artisan (with rifle), and a pistol-waving boy. Suggesting there are no real winners in an armed uprising, Delacroix included a partially nude tradesman and a Swiss Guardsman among the foreground dead. Like the fearless youth, Liberty was an invention—part ideal, part real—that simultaneously raised and undercut viewer expectations. Her classical profile, confident expression, and partial nudity evoke the classical *Venus de Milo* (second century BCE; discovered in 1820 and acquired by Louis XVIII in 1821) winged Nikes (the *Nike of Samothrace* entered the Louvre in 1879), and the sibyls on Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling. At the same time, she appears



Figure 3.13

Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830. Oil on canvas, 260 × 325 cm (8 ft 6 in × 10 ft 8 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 3.14

François Rude, *Marseillaise—Departure of the Volunteers of 1792*, 1833–36. Limestone, height: 12.8 m (42 ft). Arc de Triomphe, Paris.

disturbingly real with scandalously displayed underarm hair (women were traditionally represented depilated), and alarming male qualities of leadership and bravery. While Liberty's exposed breasts and state of undress could be rationalized as a realistic acknowledgement that laundresses often worked in their underclothes in their hot and steamy shops, it also endowed her with a timeless, allegorical quality enhanced by her Phrygian cap and large scale, while also appealing to male viewers' desire for softcore pornography.

Fellow artists immediately recognized the magnitude of Delacroix's achievement and its effectiveness in conveying patriotic commitment. François Rude (1784–1855) clearly had it in mind when he designed *La Marseillaise—Departure of the Volunteers of 1792* (1833–36, Figure 3.14). Here, an enraged, winged Liberty rouses a motley group of volunteers of all ages to fight for the French Republic, whose sovereignty was attacked by the monarchies of Europe. Even though Rude conformed to academic protocol by including heroic nudity and ancient dress and armaments, contemporary viewers would understand the analogy with the recent July

Revolution, when the populace similarly armed itself to defend republican ideals. The warrior's shaggy beard identifies him as neither a contemporary nor classical hero, but an ancient Gaul (who fought colonization by Rome), a reference suggesting the historical legitimacy of the French populace to defend its civil rights. The stirring patriotism of Rude's sculpture earned it the nickname "Marseillaise," after the French national song, which opens with the words "Let's go, children of the nation, the day of glory has arrived."

Rude studied at the Dijon Academy, and won the Prix de Rome in 1812, although he was unable to take advantage of it because government funds earmarked for culture were diverted to the military that year. A staunch supporter of Napoleon, Rude spent most of the Bourbon Restoration in self-exile in Brussels (as did David), returning with the ascension of Louis-Philippe to the throne in 1830. Since his father was one of the 1792 volunteers, the assignment must have had particular personal significance for Rude. Louis-Philippe commissioned *Departure of the Volunteers of 1792* as one of four sculptures, each by a different artist, to embellish the Arc de Triomphe. Jean-François Chalgrin (1739–1811) designed this Roman-style triumphal arch in 1806 at the request of Napoleon in order to commemorate the achievements of the French army; it was completed as a conciliatory effort to maintain balance among the various political forces (Republican, Napoleonic, aristocratic) during the July Monarchy (1830–48).

Another architectural monument completed in Paris during the July Monarchy was the Panthéon (1755–89), inspired by Rome's ancient Pantheon. Based on the design of Jacques-Germain Soufflot (1713–80) as a church of St Genviève, it was transformed into a monument to the Great Men of France during Napoleon's reign. Anxious to complete the building with a pedimental sculpture, Louis-Philippe's interior minister, François Guizot, hired Pierre-Jean David d'Angers (1788–1856) to contribute a sculpture representing illustrious men of France in the areas of science, literature, and the military. The result was *The Nation Distributing Crowns to Great Men Who Protect Liberty*, completed in 1837 (Figure 3.15). For this classical temple-style building, David d'Angers chose an appropriately classicizing solution: an allegorical representation of France (the largest figure standing in the pediment's apex), flanked by Freedom and History. Freedom and History distribute laurel crowns (used in ancient Greece to honor heroes) to men in contemporary dress. Honored on the left are great men of thought, including the moderate politician Malesherbes and Marie François Bichat, the father of pathology. On the right are men of action, including Napoleon and generic military figures, whose various roles are distinguished by details

Figure 3.15
Pierre-Jean David d'Angers, *The Nation Distributing Crowns to Great Men Who Protect Liberty*, 1830–37. Panthéon, Paris.



such as cannons, lances, and swords. Before the sculpture's completion a dispute arose between David d'Angers and the government because the sculptor, who strove for a balanced presentation of France's intellectual and moral heritage, included individuals (Lazare Carnot, Jacques-Louis David, Lafayette) whose political views conflicted with those of Louis-Philippe's government. Even the inclusion of Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (who in addition to being influential philosophers were vehemently anti-Catholic) angered political conservatives. David d'Angers's refusal to modify his design and the government's final acceptance of it was a victory for the autonomy of artists.

The works of Delacroix, Rude, and David d'Angers produced at the beginning of the July Monarchy show how, in the spirit of d'Angiviller, artists searched for styles and compositions appropriate to the ideas they sought to convey. Still, symbolic/stoic/heroic and realistic/emotional/anonymous were only some alternatives pursued by artists hoping to reform the depiction of history in the first half of the nineteenth century. Artists seeking models more familiar and less dramatic turned to the Middle Ages and Renaissance, eras remembered as times of national stability and prosperity.

ESTABLISHING MUSEUMS

As artists sought independence from rigid academic guidelines, they looked to a wider variety of sources—nature, popular culture, and other artists—for inspiration. Visiting art collections became an essential part of an artist's education. Some collections were organized as museums, and opened to a wider public. Basel was the first to open a municipal art museum (1661), following its purchase of the collection of Basilius Amerbach. A century later, the Uffizi (open by appointment since the sixteenth century) opened to the public (1765), and in 1771, Pope Clement XIV established a Vatican museum for his collection of ancient and Renaissance art. Enlightenment belief in the importance of education combined with pressure for social equality and the political imperative to demonstrate (national, municipal) superiority through the display of cultural artifacts to bring about a wave of museum building during the nineteenth century.

Publicity surrounding the French revolutionary government's opening royal art collections to the public in the Louvre palace during the 1790s inspired other national and city governments to follow suit: Budapest (1807), Madrid (1819), London (1824), Munich (1836), Edinburgh (1859), Stockholm (1866), Boston and New York (1870), Berlin (1876), and Ottawa (1882). The French national museum began with the confiscation of royal collections and Roman Catholic Church property during the French Revolution, which suddenly placed under state ownership a vast amount of art that needed a home. The same pattern occurred in Spain where, during the reign of Napoleon's brother Joseph (1808–13), Church property was nationalized. The national gallery in Madrid, situated in a building on the Paseo del Prado, opened to the public in 1819, following the restoration of Fernando VII, son of the deposed Carlos IV. Its artworks, the property of the royal family, were grouped according to national schools.

Napoleon, as part of his plan to establish Paris as the capital of a great empire, required conquered territories to send their most significant artworks to Paris for installation in the Musée Napoléon. This brought together many famous masterpieces in a kind of "greatest hits" collection that raised public consciousness about art in



Figure 3.16
Anonymous, *Eh bien, Messieurs! Deux Millions* [Napoleon displaying the *Apollo Belvedere* and other treasures taken from Italy], 1797.

France and abroad (Figure 3.16). Visitors to Paris during Napoleon’s reign could contemplate Western art history as represented by its masterpieces. Outside France, people recognized the necessity of protecting and preserving their own art as part of their national identity.

The National Gallery in London represented a different conceptual model for a national museum. Unlike the Louvre and Prado museums, it did (and does) not include royal collections. All works of art were either donated by private persons or purchased, making the museum the result of individual philanthropy and democratic decision making. While some members of parliament wanted to appropriate some of the works stolen by Napoleon following Wellington’s victory at Waterloo, Wellington insisted they be returned to their original owners. Serious discussion about establishing a national museum began when George Beaumont bequeathed his art collection to the nation, and the extensive and important collection of John Angerstein came up for sale in London.

Angerstein, a Russian immigrant, agreed to sell his collection as the foundation for a British national museum in 1823. A year later the museum opened to the public in Angerstein’s former residence. It included Italian Renaissance masterpieces and works by British artists, including Reynolds and West, and Hogarth’s *Marriage à la Mode* paintings (Figure 1.3). Parliament then began purchasing major works—by Poussin and Titian, for instance—when they came up for sale from private collections. In 1838, the National Gallery moved to its present location on Trafalgar Square. Paintings were arranged to highlight individual masterpieces. Britons began to recognize the importance of their own art in 1844, when Robert Vernon began admitting the public to his collection of British art. He donated 160 of these works—including paintings by Turner and Constable—to the National Gallery in 1848 with the provision that they be grouped together in a “Vernon Gallery,” permanent acknowledgement of a citizen’s contribution to the national patrimony. In 1853, two years after the

Crystal Palace Exhibition (which ignited the competition among nations in art and technology), the National Gallery reorganized its collection according to national school—Italian, Dutch and Flemish, French, Spanish, and English—reflecting the escalating awareness of art as an embodiment of national identity.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, no national cultural institutions emerged in the United States due to a lack of interest on the part of affluent citizens and the government; not until the twentieth century was a national art museum established in Washington (1937). This situation contrasted with Europe, although following the American Civil War (1861–65), museums were founded in major cities with the enthusiastic support of private collectors. In 1844, the New York Gallery of Fine Art opened, with the former collection of grocery magnate Luman Reed as its core. For its founders, a group of successful businessmen, establishing a museum was a point of honor since all European cities the size of New York had by then public art museums. Lack of funding caused the Gallery of Fine Art to close in 1853 and to transfer its holdings to the recently established New York Historical Society.

CONCLUSION

In order to comfort and pacify the public during an era of incessant and often unsettling change and to foster support for those in power, links to the past were forged. References to wise, respected ancient rulers and altruistic, devout saints served as effective means of ennobling the deeds of contemporary figures. At the same time, trust in secular and religious leaders wavered, and artists utilized these same associations to undermine public confidence in authority they felt was undeserving of the public trust. Individuals disillusioned by human fickleness and fallibility, who considered society guided not by rational Enlightenment principles but by egotism and indifference, began to look elsewhere for answers: to the human imagination and to nature. This more complex world view that took intuition, instinct, and unseen forces seriously is known as Romanticism.



For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter and pictures of the Panthéon and Géricault's impressive grave at Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.

Romanticism

Radical, egalitarian Enlightenment ideas, like the policy of d'Angiviller, encouraged artists to develop a visual language appropriate to the ideas they wanted to communicate. In d'Angiviller's case, the ideas he sanctioned were limited to those benefiting political stability and Neoclassicism was the style considered most appropriate. Under different circumstances however, brutal, ghastly elements could reinforce official dogma, as evidenced by Gros's *Pesthouse at Jaffa* (Figure 3.8). Intense subjectivity, associated with Romanticism, emerged in David's *Brutus* (Figure 2.9), but again, it was regulated—by Neoclassical principles. Thus, there was a certain degree of flexibility regarding the kind of painting acceptable to academies and rulers or patrons. This depended on the purpose of an artwork and the conditions under which it was conceived. English artists enjoyed the greatest freedom because of England's political stability and comparatively liberal values.

In the nineteenth century the influence on art exerted by academies and governments waned, due primarily to two factors: an expanding art market due to increasing bourgeois wealth, and the escalating popularity of radical Enlightenment ideas. Its two most important ideas—human equality and the superiority of knowledge gained through observation and experience—implied rejecting hierarchies and privileges based on birth, religion, and tradition. These included the foundational institutions of western political systems (monarchy, aristocracy), organized religion, and art academies. It also meant that an individual's feeling, experience, and ideas had inherent value.

The drastic political, social, and economic transformations of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries help explain the appeal of Romanticism. Much of Europe was ravaged by war, aristocracies feared the spread of democratic revolution, France and the United States struggled to establish stable governments, the population of Europe increased at an alarming rate, with agricultural production striving to keep up. Industrialization created a new social class, the working class, whose displacement from ancestral villages ruptured traditional social structures. Whereas previously people were secure in the knowledge that their daily meal came from a village garden, once uprooted to the city where a fledgling supply network could not always meet demand, people often no longer knew when their next meal would come, or if they could afford it, particularly in times of crop failure, unemployment, and flood. For the majority, hunger was an acute and constant concern, and drinking water was often contaminated by sewage. As a counterbalance to the helplessness felt by many in the face of circumstances they could not control, the example of Napoleon,

although ultimately a failure, showed the heights to which an individual born without money and social status, but with talent and determination, could rise.

	Great Britain	France	Germany	Austria	Belgium	Russia
1790	69	141	—	—	—	—
1825	669	212	90	85	—	164
1855	3,583	900	422	306	312	254
1875	6,484	1,462	1,770	418	484	424
1900	8,778	2,665	7,925	1,425	1,070	2,773

Data Box 4: Pig Iron Production (annual average in thousand metric tons)

ORIGINS AND CHARACTERISTICS

If Neoclassical art can generally be identified by clarity, composure, stasis, stage-like space, morally elevating subjects, rationality, and deference to authority, then Romantic art, in contrast, is marked by ambiguity, passion, movement, imagination, drama, mystery, and individualism. Since Neoclassicism and Romanticism both emerged in the 1760s, many works of art produced during the subsequent decades contained elements of both, and there are, naturally, alternative ways of categorizing art produced during this period. Still, Neoclassical art celebrated the Greco-Roman past as an era of imagined perfection, while Romantic art tended to idealize nature (divine creation), the pre-modern national past, or places geographically distant. Just as David and his followers identified (at least conceptually) as oppositional to the older, Rococo, generation, so Romantics ascribed to themselves characteristics conflicting with Neoclassicism, especially its staunch morality and rigid standards. This pattern of younger artists portraying themselves as opposite to and better than their elders established a modernist rhetorical strategy, a generational rivalry, that continues to the present. In addition, nineteenth-century artists' choices were affected by increasingly diverse circumstances: attitude toward the academy and fellow artists, personal convictions and aspirations, and financial status (freedom).

BURKE'S SUBLIME

In the 1750s, when Winckelmann wrote *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*, British philosopher Edmund Burke published *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Burke's Sublime included most elements later identified as Romantic—fear, uncertainty, obscurity, and horror. The conditions he described as producing them—danger, darkness, silence, solitude, vastness, pain, infinity—were key ingredients of Romantic art. German critic Friedrich Schlegel defined Romanticism in his 1799 “Letter About the Novel”: “Romantic is that which presents us with sentimental material in a fantastic form determined by the fantasy” (Millán-Zaibert 2007: 16).

During the 1760s, when West painted *Agrippina* (Figure 2.2), the British painter George Stubbs (1724–1806) produced *A Lion Attacking a Horse* (Figure 4.1) at the request of Lord Rockingham. Stubbs was largely self-taught. His diligent study of equine anatomy made him the most popular horse portraitist of his era. Stubbs exhibited regularly at the Society of Artists beginning in 1761 and occasionally at



Figure 4.1

George Stubbs, *A Lion Attacking a Horse*, c. 1765. Oil on canvas, 69 × 100 cm (27 × 39½ in). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

"Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger; that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. I say the strongest emotion, because I am satisfied the ideas of pain are much more powerful than those which enter on the part of pleasure. Without all doubt, the torments which we may be made to suffer are much greater in their effect on the body and mind, than any pleasures which the most learned voluptuary could suggest, or that the liveliest imagination, and the most sound and exquisitely sensible body, could enjoy. Nay, I am in great doubt whether any man could be found who would earn a life of the most perfect satisfaction, at the price of ending it in the torments which justice inflicted in a few hours on the late unfortunate regicide in France. But as pain is stronger in its operation than pleasure, so death is in general a much more affecting idea than pain; because there are very few pains, however exquisite, which are not preferred to death; nay, what generally makes pain itself, if I may say so, more painful, is, that it is considered as an emissary of this king of terrors. When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience. The cause of this I shall endeavor to investigate."

Source: Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. London: Wilson and Co. 1801. "Of the Sublime," Section VII, pp. 8–9.

the Royal Academy (RA). He produced designs for Wedgwood and in the 1790s was under the patronage of the Prince of Wales (later King George IV). Stubbs made numerous versions of *Lion Attacking a Horse*—from enamel miniatures to prints and full-scale oil paintings—over a period of 30 years, indicating the subject's appeal to Stubbs's contemporaries. This is a hybrid work. On the one hand, elimination of extraneous detail, meticulous execution, and planar stability link it to Neoclassicism, while on the other, the horse's terror and lion's savagery connect it to Romanticism's fascination with the uncontrollable forces of nature. The subject was inspired by ancient art: the fourth-century BCE Greek sculpture of a lion attacking a horse, which

Figure 4.2

Benjamin West, *Death on a Pale Horse*, 1796. Oil on canvas, 60 × 129 cm (23½ × 50½ in). Detroit Institute of Arts.



Stubbs saw at the Palazzo dei Conservatori during his 1755 visit to Rome. Painter Benjamin Haydon (1786–1846) explained Stubbs's possible attraction to this subject in an 1835 lecture:

It was evident that the lion was but a modification of the human being, varied in organic construction and muscular arrangement, only where it was necessary he should be, that his bodily powers might suit his instincts, his propensities, his appetites, and his lower degree of reasoning power.

(Haydon 1844: 13)

In *Lion Attacking a Horse* Stubbs created an original synthesis of the classical and the Sublime.

Three decades later, Benjamin West, one of the most remarkable artists of his era because he was a pioneer of both Neoclassicism and Romanticism, executed his second version of *Death on a Pale Horse* (Figure 4.2). His *Agrippina* was a precocious example of the Neoclassical style in painting, and *Death on a Pale Horse* was an early example of the mature Romantic style in Britain. Although religious subjects were considered history painting, such a terrifying vision from the sixth chapter of the Revelation of St John the Divine (the final, apocalyptic book of the New Testament), demonstrated that even the Bible offered possibilities for exploring the dark inner depths of the human psyche.

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

(St. John 6:7–8)

John Galt, author of the text accompanying the painting's exhibition in 1817 noted that "the general effect proposed to be excited by this picture is the terrible sublime and its various manifestations," a far cry from the patriotically inspiring images David and Gros painted during this period (Erffa and Staley 1986: 157). West intended the painting as a political allegory: when it was exhibited in 1796, Napoleon, viewed by his enemies as the personification of Death, was wreaking havoc throughout Europe.

Death on a Pale Horse was part of a commission awarded to West in 1781 by George III for the chapel at Windsor Castle that entailed depicting the history of revealed religion from the first book of the Bible, Genesis, to the last, Revelation. By 1801, when the insane king abandoned the project, West had completed 18 paintings. The King refused to accept *Death on a Pale Horse*, which he considered a chaotic scene of carnage. However when American painter Washington Allston (1779–1843) saw it upon his arrival in London in 1801, he was awestruck: “a more sublime and awful picture I never beheld ... no painter has exceeded Mr. West in the fury, horror, and despair which he has represented in the surrounding figures” (Alberts 1978: 341). West, then president of the RA, exhibited *Death on a Pale Horse* at the 1802 Salon (the only year between 1793 and 1814 when British visitors could travel to Paris). David made a snide remark about its being derivative of Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) (Alberts 1978: 263). Decades later, the painting was sold to the Earl of Egremont, a patron of Joseph Turner (Chapter 5). In addition to a version exhibited at the RA in 1783, West made a third version in 1817, which toured America—including Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. The fact that West revisited the subject so long after his abandonment of the royal commission and that he refused to sell his 1796 version to a willing buyer at the time (William Beckford) suggests that the subject held personal significance for the artist. In a sublime landscape of natural disasters—earthquakes, thunderstorms, volcanic eruptions—humans become powerless victims in the face of inevitable destructive forces. This pessimistic vision of a world on the verge of collapse could not be further from the Neoclassical vision of individual control exemplified by David’s *Napoleon at the St Bernard Pass* (Figure 3.5). At the same time, the muscular male nudes in the foreground affirm West’s expertise in rendering male anatomy, one of the core academic skills.

Boundaries between Neoclassicism and Romanticism are often vague. An artwork might have Neoclassical form and Romantic content (Stubbs’s *Lion Attacking a Horse*), or Neoclassical content and Romantic form (Gros’s *Pesthouse at Jaffa*). Artists rarely consciously allied themselves with a particular movement; instead, they made choices best suited to their purposes. The Swiss painter Heinrich Fuseli (1741–1825) exemplified the wide-ranging interests of progressive eighteenth-century artists. He translated into English Winckelmann’s *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*, as well as Jean Gaspard Lavater’s quirky *Essays on Physiognomy* (1775–78), which theorized that facial structure and bumps on the skull reveal a person’s inner character. The son of a painter, Fuseli lived in Rome from 1770 to 1778, where he became the nucleus of a circle that included Thomas Banks and James Barry. He moved to London in 1779, where he taught drawing at the RA (his pupils included Edwin Landseer, Chapter 7) and painted *The Nightmare* (Figure 4.3). In a painting whose title suggests irrationality, a woman with an unusually thick neck cascades over a bed or sofa in a dark, curtained room. The gentle arc of her body and her elongated legs, ending in a very pointed foot, endow the woman with a lithe elegance that contrasts with the gnarly, pointy-eared male incubus seated on her abdomen.

While the inspiration for Fuseli’s image remains speculative, it may project an unconsummated desire for his 21-year-old niece. Her father refused Fuseli’s proposal of marriage in 1779, and the artist had an erotic dream in which he and Anna made love—a dream he described in a letter to Lavater (Powell 1978: 60). Viewed in this light, male urges manifest themselves as animalistic, an interpretation reinforced by the presence of a wild-eyed horse representing the forces of nature (as in Stubbs’s

Figure 4.3

Heinrich Fuseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781. Oil on canvas, 101 × 127 cm (40 × 50 in). Detroit Institute of Arts.



Lion Attacking a Horse; David's *Napoleon*, Figure 3.5; or Géricault's *Wounded Cuirassier*, Figure 3.10). An interesting, if small, detail here is the series of gray stripes on the drapery swathe under the woman's thigh. Rather than following the contours of the fabric, they seem painted without consideration for variations in illusionistic depth—they lay flat across the surface, emphasizing the flatness of the canvas surface. This constituted an unusual assertion of two-dimensionality in the eighteenth century, when a painting was still considered a “window” onto an alternative reality. While Mengs asserted the flatness of ceilings in *Parnassus* (Figure 1.16), Fuseli was bolder, asserting the two-dimensionality of the canvas itself.

Exhibited at the RA in 1781, *The Nightmare's* weird imagery brought Fuseli instant attention. Viewers might also have appreciated the title's play on words (mare = horse), which only works in English (*Alptraum*—literally Alp dream—is the word for nightmare in German). Dreams increasingly drew the attention of scientific investigators. Gotthilf von Schubert (no relation to the composer), a Dresden doctor and acquaintance of Caspar David Friedrich (Chapter 5), published one of the first scientific analyses of the unconscious in 1814, *Dream Symbolism*, anticipating the research of Sigmund Freud in the 1890s.

BLAKE AND THE IMAGINATION

The pessimism reflected in these paintings by West and Fuseli was not inevitable, according to William Blake (1757–1827), who painted his own version of *Death on a Pale Horse* around 1800. An engraver by profession, Blake conceived a cryptic cosmology to explain human history and to suggest a strategy for salvation. A lifelong friend of fellow engraver John Flaxman, Blake hoped to make the traditional artist's pilgrimage to Italy in the 1780s, but failed to raise sufficient funds. Blake's illuminated books,

although peopled by characters with unfamiliar names like Urizen and Los, explained that all problems and suffering began with a loss of original unity, a harmony between human and natural realms existing in the Garden of Eden. According to Blake, this fall into division is repeated in every individual as they lose their childhood innocence and become self-conscious adults. He believed this cognitive development led to the erroneous conceptualization of experience and information dialectically and resulted in compartmentalization, differentiation, prioritization, and conflict. Blake believed that the more refined rational processes became, the more devastating the outcome. Individuals convinced of the truth and goodness of their own values often inflicted the greatest damage, through egotism and self-righteousness.

Blake practiced the unifying message he preached, and delivered his tidings in a series of illustrated books, which he designed, wrote, decorated, and printed himself. Beginning with *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794), Blake conveyed the security, happiness, and fulfillment of the Innocent realm and the fear, pettiness, and malevolence of the realm of Experience in hand-lettered poems embellished with illustrated borders that resembled prayer books or illuminated manuscripts. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1789) describes the theological opposition between virtue and sin as a pathetic, destructive figment of a limited human imagination with crucial political and social implications. Blake considered dualities—good and evil, right and wrong—dangerous and artificial constructs that brought about misery and suffering. Just as harmful were differential privileges accorded to social class and race.

Because Blake believed that imposed limitations impeded freedom, unity, and bliss, he loathed the god who imprisoned individual souls in human bodies. Freed from the shackles of earthly existence, souls lived in harmony, unfettered by the material, physical, or emotional concerns. In *The Ancient of Days* (1794, British Museum, London), Blake shows God creating the universe with the aid of a compass. According to Blake, the god envisioned by humans possessed extreme versions of their own character traits (love, vengeance, desire for power). This limited vision was a destructive force that worsened with age, because the old used their experience to unjustly exercise authority and impose their will on the young and future generations. Salvation, for Blake, lay with the overthrow of the old order, and for that reason he rejoiced at the onset of revolution in France but, like many others, became disillusioned with its course and the eventual ascension of Napoleon to power. Blake considered destruction of the old and birth of a new order as the only hope for human salvation, an idea conveyed in *Jerusalem* (1804–20), which would resurface at the end of the century.

The hope which Blake invested in the spiritual reawakening of youth emerged in “*And the Angel Which I Saw Lifted Up His Head to Heaven*” (Figure 4.4). Here, St John the Evangelist sits on the Greek island of Patmos writing Chapter Ten of the Book of Revelation:

Then I saw another Mighty Angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke.

Figure 4.4

William Blake, "And the Angel Which I Saw Lifted Up His Head to Heaven," c. 1803–05. Watercolor, pen and black ink, over traces of graphite, 39 × 26 cm (15½ × 10¼ in). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Blake's angel of hope is connected to earth, sea, and heaven, and surround by an infinitely expanding divine light. In a dark cloud at knee level, the "seven thunders"—prophets of apocalyptic doom—are envisioned by Blake as bearded, elderly horsemen.

Consistent with Blake's rejection of the old order was his embrace of non-traditional artistic practices. For individual works, he preferred watercolor to oil, and developed an experimental painting technique of pigments mixed with wood glue and painted on a surface primed with a glue-plaster base. Although it did not catch on with other artists, this technique proved more stable than the popular practice of adding bitumen to pigment, as Géricault did when painting *Raft of the Medusa* (Figure 3.11). In his illuminated books, Blake refused to use a commercial letterpress because it detracted from the individuality of his script. While Blake engraved his book pages onto copper plates—a technique developed to facilitate the quick and inexpensive production of numerous copies—he, with the help of his wife, Catherine, hand colored and bound them into books, a laborious, time-consuming process. As a result, few volumes were produced. These were purchased by a small group of patrons, who occasionally favored Blake with commissions for watercolor illustrations to contemporary poets like Edward Young (*Night Thoughts*) or traditional ones, like Dante (*Divine Comedy*). Blake regularly exhibited at the Royal Watercolour Society.

Watercolor escalated in popularity in the final two decades of the eighteenth century due to the development and marketing of commercially produced paints. Watercolor was simpler and tidier than oil painting and it dried faster. Popular among tourists eager to record their travels, artists who wanted to make quick sketches in color, and young ladies, for whom it was considered a desirable skill, watercolor was marginalized by the oil-fixated academy. In response to public demand for a venue dedicated to the burgeoning production of watercolors, exhibiting and teaching associations formed, the most prominent of which was the Royal Watercolour Society, established in 1804.

NATURE MYSTICISM

Like Blake, Philipp Otto Runge (1777–1810) had faith in the potential of youth to redeem a humanity gone astray. His *Hülsenbeck Children* (Figure 4.5) seem infused with the latent energy of flowers about to bloom. Although a native of Pomerania, the north German province ruled by Sweden until 1815, Runge studied at the Copenhagen Academy for about a year before moving to Hamburg in 1801, where he worked in his family's shipping business. In Copenhagen, Runge mastered the minutely detailed academic technique under the tutelage of Jens Juel (Figure 7.3) and Nicolai Abildgaard. Runge developed an intense hyperrealism that would not be matched until the advent of *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) in the 1920s. While indisputably children (clear from their clothing, large heads, pudgy cheeks, and disarming gazes), Runge paradoxically suggests an adult scale for these siblings by the shortness of the picket fence, which presses the figures toward the viewer in an exaggerated rush into deep space. The children are framed on the left by sunflowers, signifying vitality, and on the other by an oak tree, symbolizing longevity and Germanness. The well-dressed, confident children evidence bourgeois prosperity and comfort in



Figure 4.5
Philipp Otto Runge, *Hülsenbeck Children*, 1805–06. Oil on canvas, 131 × 141 cm (4 ft 3 in × 4 ft 6 in). Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

their gender-defined roles: August commands the wagon, gazes at the viewer, and wields a stick with the confidence of Napoleon crossing the Alps, while sister Maria, behind and partly in shadow, glances with maternal tenderness at baby Friedrich. The source of Hülsenbeck wealth—a textile factory—appears in the left background and their comfortable, suburban home appears at right—bourgeois Hamburgers were the first urbanites to establish suburbs in order to avoid paying high city property and income taxes.

Like the plants, the Hülsenbeck children seem rooted in a secure and nurturing environment. The paradoxical presence of child and adult qualities combines with the manipulated scale in this portrait to suggest other interpretations. Runge communicated the idea of a child's innate vitality and innocence as well as the notion that social training determines class and gender roles, a subject taken up later by Edgar Degas (Figure 12.11). The figural arrangement evokes the Holy Family's flight to Egypt (with the wagon replacing the donkey), infusing the children with spiritual significance. They augur the beginning of a new, modern era in which bourgeois values reign and children are of central importance. Liberation and enlightenment—spiritual as well as political—constituted for Runge, as for Blake and many other Romantics, the highest human achievement.

Runge believed that plants and colors contained divine meanings that could be intuited by those tuned in to the correct spiritual channel. Like Blake, he developed a cryptic cosmology explaining relationships between the material and spiritual worlds. In it, Runge synthesized a variety of contemporary ideas: the color theory of his friend Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the nature philosophy of Friedrich von Schelling, and the theology of Gotthard Kosegarten. The unfinished work expressing these ideas was the *Times of Day*, a series of four paintings, of which only *Morning* (Figure 4.6) was completed.

Runge utilized the brushless, minutely detailed technique of Neoclassicism to express mystical ideas. *Morning's* three-tiered composition and spiritual content reflects the influence of Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* (1512–14), which Runge saw during an 1801–02 stay in Dresden, but its meaning is more complicated. In a letter to his brother Daniel, Runge explained: “the light is the lily and the three groups, according to their placement, are related to the Trinity. Venus is the pistil or the center of light and I have tried to give her no other form than that of a star” (Bisanz 1970: 109).

Runge conflated astronomy, theology, and botany, associating the feminine (Venus, the morning star) with the birth/dawn of a new day, symbolized by the baby and recalling the infant Jesus along with ideas about redemption, resurrection, and spiritual rebirth. The Elbe River landscape suggests national rebirth at the moment when Napoleon's armies ravaged the German countryside. Here, Runge synthesized time, spirituality, and patriotism in one complex motif. Like Blake, Runge designed a complementary border/frame. At the bottom, cherubs flee from the darkness (physical and spiritual) of an eclipsed sun, while in the corners, companions sit imprisoned by amaryllis roots. As the plant grows toward the light, cherubs are liberated, and the flower blossoms. Runge's image seems foretold by Johann Sulzer, who wrote in his *General Theory of Fine Art*: “Many a conception ripens gradually within us, and then, freeing itself as though of its own accord from the mass of obscure ideas, emerges suddenly into the light. Every artist must rely on such happy expressions of his genius...” (Sulzer 1778: 234).



Figure 4.6
 Philipp Otto Runge, *The 'Small' Morning* (first version), 1808.
 Oil on canvas, 109 × 85.5 cm.
 Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

GOYA: AMBIGUITY AND MODERNISM

Francisco Goya (1746–1828), son of an impoverished goldsmith, began his art studies at fourteen in his hometown of Saragossa as an apprentice to José Luzan Martínez (1710–85), a church decorator who had studied in Italy. Goya competed unsuccessfully twice for the Madrid Academy's Rome Prize during the 1760s and financed his own, year-long trip to Italy in 1770. Upon his return, Goya painted frescoes for churches in Saragossa, which attracted the attention of Mengs, employed by Carlos III (formerly King of Naples and the Two Sicilies, Chapter 1) from 1761 until his return to Rome in 1777. Mengs helped Goya obtain his first important commission in 1775—designs for a series of tapestries depicting Spanish life for the royal residence at El Prado, outside Madrid. Among the more than 60 designs made between 1775 and 1792 was *Injured Mason*, also referred to as “*Drunken Mason*” (Figure 4.7), indicative of the modernist ambiguity informing many of Goya's works. It was executed in 1786, the same year Goya was appointed Court Painter to Carlos III.

In contrast to the solemn subjects dominating official French painting in the 1780s, Goya represented an everyday, contemporary scene. This incident was tragic regardless of whether it represented injury or drunkenness. Physical injury often put a devastating halt to a man's earning potential in an era before health insurance, unions, and competent medical treatment. Drunkenness was a vexing problem. Employers often subsidized workers' pay with alcohol, and workers, seeking temporary escape from a life of toil and trouble, often drank to excess. The continuing problem posed by alcohol in the nineteenth century is evidenced by the fact that it was frequently



Figure 4.7
Francisco José de Goya y
Lucientes, *Injured Mason*, 1786.
Oil on canvas, 268 × 110 cm
(8 ft 10 in × 3 ft 7 in). Museo
Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

represented by artists such as George Cruikshank (Figures 9.5–6), William Holman Hunt (Figure 7.16), Vasily Perov (Figure 10.10), and Edgar Degas (Figure 12.7).

While such mundane physical or moral frailty may seem an unusual topic for a court artist considering the prevailing academic hierarchy of painting, Goya did not intend for *Injured Mason* to compete in an official academic arena despite its life size—more than two meters high and one wide; instead it was a design for a decorative object, a tapestry. Had Goya submitted it to a major exhibition such as the Salon or RA, it would have created a scandal because its size was too large for such a banal subject. Critical controversy at the time, and throughout the nineteenth century, was generated not solely by subject matter or technique, but also by the scale of the work and the venue in which it appeared, as we saw in the case of Géricault's *Medusa*. This sympathetic, true-to-life portrayal anticipated the popularity of working classes by several decades (see Chapter 9). Here, however, the image celebrated building reforms initiated by Carlos III that required the safe construction of scaffolding used for public projects.

A Romantic fascination with irrational creative forces emerged in *The Dream/Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* (1799, Figure 4.8), executed by Goya for his first print series *The Caprices*. Goya chose this title despite, or perhaps defiantly because,



Figure 4.8
Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *The Dream / Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, Plate 43, *Los Caprichos*, 1799. Etching and aquatint, 22 × 15 cm (8 × 6 in). Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, IN.

the Roman Catholic Jesuit Order (dominant in Spain) judged “caprices” the product of insanity. Here, an owl, grasping chalk in its talon and joined by a chorus of owls and bat-like creatures, screeches into the ear of a writer. While the emotional pitch is higher than in Flaxman’s Homer illustrations (Figure 2.6), Goya similarly omitted a plausible setting, which focuses attention on the human drama. Goya’s strategy may be indebted to Flaxman’s illustrations, which were in the Spanish royal collection. As in Fuseli’s *Nightmare*, the domestic domain of a lone and sleeping individual is invaded, suggesting that neither physical barriers nor rational constructs can shut out the monstrous and destructive forces of the outside world, or one’s inner demons.

This image embodies modernist ambiguity in a variety of ways. Goya described this image: “Imagination, deserted by reason, begets impossible monsters. United with reason, she is the mother of all arts and the source of their wonders” (Lopez-Rey 1973: 132). Do these words reflect Goya’s own opinion or the figure’s? Is the figure Goya or a Spanish aristocrat or intellectual? Did Goya believe that the absence of

reason generated monsters, or did he think that those naïve enough to believe reason would eradicate injustice and superstition were in danger of losing their own minds? In an early version of the print, Goya inscribed the words: “The artist dreaming. His only purpose is to banish harmful, vulgar beliefs, and to perpetuate in this work of caprices the solid testimony of truth” (Lopez-Rey 1973: 132). This brings us no closer to a definitive interpretation of *Sleep of Reason*, since the viewer is still left wondering if the “author” is Goya himself, someone else, or a generic figure, and whether his tone is straightforward or sarcastic. Goya’s biography provides evidence for all possibilities: on the one hand, he admired and owned the satirical prints of Hogarth, and on the other, he died a disillusioned and embittered old man.

The other 79 prints of the *Caprices* satirize corruption, ignorance, materialism, superstition, and vanity, as well as the oppression of Spanish peasants by the Roman Catholic Church (the Inquisition, with its executions, was in full swing) and the government. These institutions concealed the actual threat to the populace: political, religious, and social tyranny. Goya’s motivation for producing the *Caprices* included reform, fame, and financial success. In the late 1790s, when Goya conceived the project, Spanish Enlightenment intellectuals were frustrated by their inability to influence government policy, which had become more repressive due to fear of the French Revolution spreading and in response to the military threat from France. That Goya targeted reform-minded Spanish intellectuals seems clear from his 1799 advertisement in Madrid newspapers, which identified the *Caprices* as describing “the multitude of follies and blunders common in every civil society, as well as from the vulgar prejudices and lies authorized by custom, ignorance, or interest...” (Lopez-Rey 1973: 130–1). However, with Napoleon threatening the stability of regimes across Europe, the political climate of many nations suddenly became more conservative. This was the case in Spain, and Goya withdrew the series from sale by 1800 under pressure from the Spanish Inquisition. In an effort to ensure their obscurity, King Carlos IV purchased from Goya in 1803 all of the engraved copperplates for the *Caprices* as well as the 240 unsold sets of prints.

Goya’s modernism emerges here in his pioneering technique—**aquatint**—and his use of the “thought bubble” composition, used with increasing frequency by artists in order to picture the thoughts of their subjects. Unlike etching, which only permits the printing of ink sinking into incised grooves of a metal plate, the aquatint process involves acid biting into a resin-coated copper plate in up to ten steps of varying depth. This allows the artist to add tinted blocks, seen here in both the murky background and in the paler, tombstone-like inscribed plate beneath the desk.

Although Carlos III died in 1788, Goya remained in royal employment, working for Carlos IV until Napoleon forced the King’s abdication in 1808. Still, this was a difficult period for Goya, who experienced a mysterious illness resulting in lifelong deafness. Despite all the advantages of his position (he was appointed director of the Madrid Academy in 1795), life as Court Artist must have been stressful, since antagonizing the royal family could result in a fate as tragic as his contemporary Mozart’s—dismissed by the Austrian court, the composer died impoverished in 1791 at the age of 36. Goya painted dozens of portraits for the royal family and other members of the nobility, but his largest and best known is the group portrait of the royal family, begun in 1800 (Figure 4.9). Carlos IV and his family were pleased by this life-size portrait, with its casual, familial grouping and glittering finery. Queen Maria Luisa advertises her maternal instincts by holding the hand of her youngest son and

Aquatint

A printing (etching) technique in which varnish is applied to a metal plate in those areas that will remain white. Then the surface is coated with resin powder and heated so the resin adheres to the surface. This is sometimes done in layers to achieve tonal gradations. The artist then uses a needle to draw, scraping through to the metal plate. Afterwards the plate is submerged in acid, which eats into the drawn lines and around the resin grains, creating dappled areas of ink. The process developed in the seventeenth century. See <http://www.moma.org/interactives/projects/2001/whatisaprint/print.html>.



Figure 4.9

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *Family of Carlos IV*, 1800–01. Oil on canvas, 280 × 336 cm (9 ft 2 in × 11 ft). Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

resting her right arm affectionately around the shoulder of her daughter. The three most powerful figures, while harmoniously integrated into the family group, are subtly distinguished in height and position—Carlos IV in his black suit stands a bit in front of the others, as does the crown prince, the future King Fernando VII, whose pose mirrors his father's. Fernando, one of the cruelest rulers in Spanish history, casts a long, dark shadow while his fiancée, dressed like the Queen and reputedly ugly, turns her face away from the viewer. Queen Maria Luisa stands at the compositional center of the painting. This makes sense considering that she and her lover, Manuel Godoy, actually controlled the government (a situation scandalizing Spaniards). Godoy was Spain's prime minister from 1792 until 1808, but he continued to exert power even after he stepped out the limelight.

The family posed in a gallery of the Royal Palace. Working on his enormous portrait in the left background, stands Goya. This unusual composition that includes the artist (whose easel is set up behind his subjects), refers to one of the most famous and enigmatic of Spanish royal portraits, Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656–57, Prado, Madrid). Usually artists stood in front of their subjects to paint their faces. If, however, the royal family stands before a large mirror into which the artist also looks, the mystery is resolved. Access to a mirror means the subject can see her- or himself and exercise control over her or his expression and posture. Yet Goya painted them with unflattering honesty in terms of appearance and character. Now, the dynamic has changed and the viewer stands in the place of the mirror. While the royal family looks at itself unaware of the viewer's presence, the viewer gazes directly at them, and Goya, who set up this situation, gazes into posterity at the viewer. This complex web of gazes evidenced a fascination with psychological complexity associated with modern consciousness.



To find out what Goya's contemporaries thought of *Family of Carlos IV* go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

Figure 4.10

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *The Third of May 1808*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 266 × 345 cm (8 ft 8 in × 11 ft 4 in). Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.



Progressive Spanish intellectuals initially welcomed Napoleonic rule with the liberal reforms it promised, but they soon learned that the military regime led by Napoleon's brother Joseph Bonaparte (1808–14) governed as mercilessly as had the royal family and Inquisition. On 2 May 1808, the Madrid populace rioted against French forces. French General Murat ordered the streets cleared, but the angry inhabitants refused. Murat rounded up everyone carrying a weapon (many men carried knives as a matter of habit), and some 1,000 “insurgents” were executed on the 2 and 3 of May. Carlos IV abdicated on 5 May 1808 and lived in exile in Bayonne, France where Napoleon ensured his safety. Goya dared not paint these events until the restoration of Fernando VII in 1814. Like David, Goya was a survivor, and he worked for Joseph Bonaparte during the Napoleonic occupation.

The Third of May 1808 (Figure 4.10) revealed the heroic tragedy of ordinary individuals compelled by circumstances beyond their control into the role of political martyrs. Varied responses to terror and despair in the face of a violent and untimely death emerge in the expressions and gestures of the condemned. The central victim raises his arms in a gesture of capitulation that simultaneously echoes the posture of the crucified Christ and of Saint Francis receiving the stigmata (the wounds of Christ mysteriously appearing on a devout individual's hands and feet). His gesture also reflected the Spanish tradition of submitting to the suffering of Christ via self-flagellation, crowns of thorns, hair shirts, and even having oneself nailed to a cross. Goya's anonymous martyr-victim kneels in the spotlight of a lantern, developed by Napoleon's engineers to facilitate nighttime battlefield maneuvers. Here, however, technology is used to facilitate rather than alleviate suffering. A tonsured Franciscan monk prays fervently, ineffective in either comforting or saving the condemned, an expression of Goya's disdain for the Catholic Church and its insincere concern for its faithful.

Goya's proto-cinematic composition—a sequence of before, during, and after in the ordeal of the martyrs—heightens the pathos by showing emotional extremes of such an experience along with its pointless outcome. Unlike Gros, who depicted battlefield heroism in a monumental format (Figure 3.9), Goya produced a large-scale history painting financed by the Spanish government that revealed the victimization of helpless citizens in wartime. Goya witnessed troubling atrocities committed by French military and Spanish civilians during the Napoleonic occupation. Both groups evidenced a repugnant disregard for human life, with duty and desperation generating emotional detachment with horrifying consequences. During these years, Goya made a series of more than 50 etchings he called “The Fatal Consequences of the Bloody War in Spain against Bonaparte and other Striking Caprices” (Sayre 1974: 128). Now known as *Disasters of War*, their shockingly banal treatment of unspeakable violence and torture prevented their publication until 1863. Goya never intended to print them during his lifetime because of the certainty of prosecution by Fernando VII, who rescinded the democratizing Constitution of 1812 and persecuted political dissenters. The small size of these prints forces the viewer into an intimate examination of the horrors of war that Goya shares. Goya may have known Jacques Callot's print series *Miseries and Misfortunes of War* (1639–56), which pioneered in miniature scale the depiction of the gruesome indignities human beings visited upon each other.

Disillusioned by Fernando VII's repressive regime, Goya retired from public life in 1819, spending the subsequent five years at his country home near Madrid, known as The House of the Deaf Man (*Quinta del Sordo*). There he painted a series of frescoes (Prado, Madrid), describing a desolate, post-apocalyptic landscape reminiscent of the film *Road Warrior* (1981). The characters are no better either. The most sublimely horrific image shows *Saturn Devouring His Children* (Figure 4.11), which can be interpreted on several levels. On a mythological level, it refers to Saturn as Father Time, and time as the devourer of all life. In response to a prophecy that he would be overthrown by his son, Saturn ate each of his children as they were born. His wife, Rhea, saved the youngest, Zeus, by substituting a stone. As predicted, Zeus led the gods in a ten-year war against Saturn and the Titans, and ruled the earth during the age of humans. On a political level, the myth refers to the senseless suffering inflicted by Fernando VII's regime on its subjects. On a psychological level, it refers to irrational, uncontrollable human forces manifesting themselves in sadistic impulses. On a social level, the myth refers to the superstitious outlook of Spanish peasants, reinforced by the Inquisition through intimidation and torture. (Female) witchcraft was accepted at the time as a reality involving bizarre practices such as sexual relations with Satan and devouring children. Although the last witchcraft trial in Spain took place in 1746, belief in the black arts continued among the peasantry. *Saturn* also recalls Dante's Ugolino, but not the moment of psychological tension when the Count's sons offer themselves to their starving father (Reynolds, Figure 1.19 and Carpeaux, Figure 11.9). Instead, Goya depicts a later moment when a madman succumbs to base instincts despite the consequences.

ABNORMAL MENTAL STATES

Goya had been interested in psychology since at least the 1790s. In *Yard with Madmen* (Figure 4.12) he evidenced a compassionate view of mental deviance that contrasted with contemporary Spanish attitudes, which attributed irrational behavior to demonic



Figure 4.11

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *Saturn Devouring His Children*, c.1820. Oil on canvas, 145 × 83 cm (57½ × 32¾ in). Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

possession. At the time, insanity was considered incurable, and those judged mentally ill (including religious heretics, murderers, thieves, and political dissidents) were typically warehoused in asylums run by charitable or religious organizations. There they were kept barely alive, physically confined, and frequently punished. In contrast, the Saragossa asylum depicted by Goya was, at least comparatively, humane and progressive. It encouraged patient participation in farming and food preparation, and taught inmates crafts. Goya, who may have visited the Saragossa asylum in connection with his mental breakdown around the time this was painted, represented a realm of physical and psychological torment isolated from the “normal” world beyond. Considering the cynicism in his contemporaneous *Caprices*, Goya may have intended *Asylum* as a metaphoric microcosm of the violence he witnessed in Spanish society.

Three decades later, in the early 1820s, Théodore Géricault painted five portraits of anonymous individuals who were probably mental patients either at Salpêtrière Hospital, which had a ward for women, or Bicêtre Hospital, which had a ward for men. In the 1860s these paintings were owned by Dr Lachèze, who interned at Salpêtrière in the 1820s, an era when Salpêtrière researchers were trying to classify types of mental illness according to their behavioral and physiognomic characteristics. Dr Jean-Etienne Esquirol led the research and held the first courses on psychopathology in 1817. To aid in his teaching, Esquirol commissioned drawings



Figure 4.12
Francisco José de Goya y
Lucientes, *Yard with Madmen*
(*Corral de Locos*), 1794. Oil
on tin-plated iron, 43 × 32 cm
(16⅞ × 12⅜ inches). Meadows
Museum, Dallas.

of patients exhibiting particular sets of symptoms in order to better understand them and to devise appropriate treatments, and it is possible that these paintings are related to that project.

Psychological studies often took as their point of departure Johann Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* (1772), which postulated a direct relationship between appearance and character. Based on this hypothesis, scientists studied expressions, gestures, and reactions to stimuli, measured body parts, and analyzed their relationships in order to discern patterns enabling them to predict and diagnose mental illness. Géricault was fascinated by medical topics and had regular contact with doctors and hospitals in the 1810s in order to obtain cadavers for study. Esquirol believed that there were varying degrees and types of mental illness and proposed that causes were more often circumstantial than genetic.

Louis Viardot, the scholar who “discovered” these portraits in 1863, claimed that they represented different kinds of monomania (obsessions) and provided titles and descriptions which seem to have no documentary basis. *The Madwoman* (1819–20, Figure 4.13) represents a woman supposedly enraged when witnessing acts of kindness toward others; for almost a century the painting was titled *Obsessed by Envy: the Hyena of Salpêtrière*. The nickname “Hyena” establishes the subject’s status on a par with animals, thus dehumanizing her. Géricault’s careful recording of physical features conformed to the dominant scientific method for psychological investigations

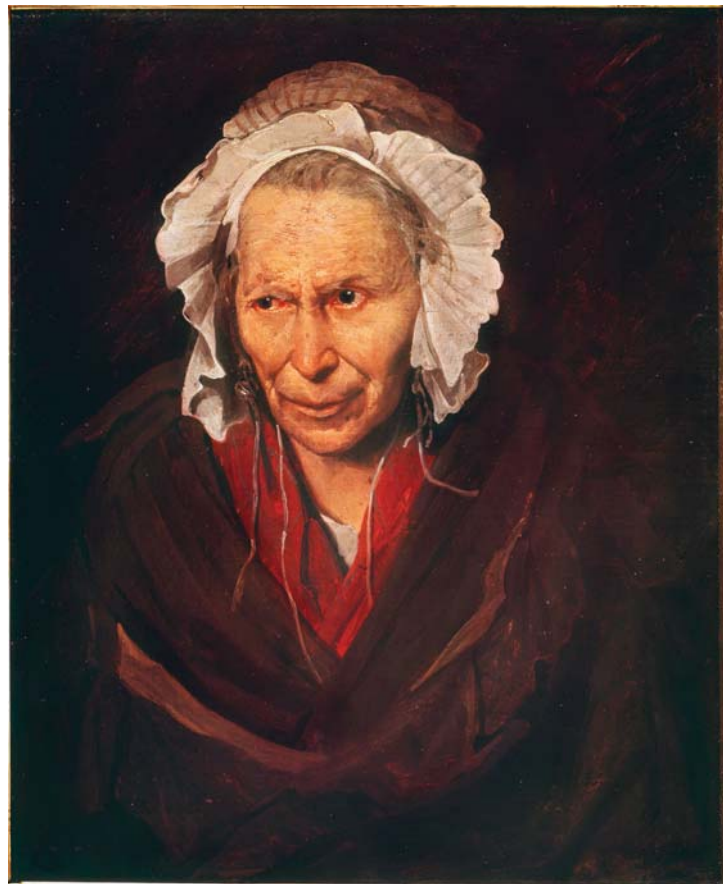


Figure 4.13

Théodore Géricault, *The Madwoman*, 1819–20. Oil on canvas, 72 × 58 cm (28¾ × 22¾ in). Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon.



To compare scholarly interpretations of *The Madwoman* go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

throughout the nineteenth century. He focused on facial features, illuminating the head with artificial intensity. The Hyena's untied and uneven bonnet strings, tensed mouth, bloodshot, asymmetrical eyes, and twisted mouth describe an appearance—and thus a personality—considered deviant. The fact that the names of these subjects were never recorded suggests that their significance rested on their exemplifying particular psychoses, rather than on their identity as individuals, despite the specificity of physiognomic detail.

SCULPTURE

French sculptor Auguste Préault (1809–79) expressed a disillusionment about human behavior similar to Goya's in *Tuerie* (*Slaughter*, Figure 4.14), exhibited at the 1834 Salon and causing such a scandal that he never again showed at the Salon during the reign of Louis-Philippe (1830–48), surviving mainly as a tomb sculptor. Largely self-taught, he studied briefly with David d'Angers (1788–1856). Préault belonged to a growing contingent of artists operating—at least partly—outside academic boundaries. His freedom from rigid academic principles facilitated the conception of this radical sculpture, whose composition, subject, expression, and purpose defied convention. Like Goya, Préault displayed extremes of human suffering with no apparent salvation. Here, however, Préault omitted a narrative context. A man with a gashed chest throws his head back in anguish; a screaming mother holds



Figure 4.14
Auguste Préault, *Tuerie*
(*Slaughter*), 1834. Bronze,
109 × 140 cm (3 ft 7 in ×
4 ft 7 in). Musée de Chartres.

the body of her limp baby, whose leg is entangled in the hair of a dead woman. The mother seems to address the bearded barbarian and medieval knight—a hodge-podge of times, geographies, ages, and extreme states of emotion and pain with no visible cause. This jumble of partial figures intersecting in irrational ways denied the illusionistic continuity expected in sculptural reliefs. The title of the work is *Slaughter* (inscribed above the mother's forehead), but which slaughter? Did Préault symbolize a specific historical event or was it an apocalyptic vision? A religious or patriotic context would explain the purpose of their suffering, but the artist withheld any clarification, leaving the viewer to grapple with ambiguity. Préault's modern vision of pain and terror without purpose or relief may have inspired Pablo Picasso when he created *Guernica* (1937, Prado, Madrid).

Préault's radicalism contrasted with more straightforward sculptures by artists like Antoine-Louis Barye (1796–1875), whose *Lion Crushing a Serpent* (Figure 4.15) appeared in a plaster version at the 1833 Salon. Barye, like Stubbs, specialized in portraying animals in watercolor, prints, and bronze tabletop sculptures that were enthusiastically collected by the bourgeoisie. Demand for them was so great that the entrepreneurial Barye pioneered the mass production (under careful supervision) of sculpture, hiring a bronze foundry to make multiple copies of his work. The son of a goldsmith, Barye studied at the École des Beaux-Arts (1818–23). His best known public sculptures are the 97 decorative masks on the Pont Neuf bridge in Paris.

Lion Crushing a Serpent typified Barye's highly detailed renderings of animal anatomy and expression, mastered through hours of careful observation and sketching at the zoo of Paris's botanical garden (*Jardin des Plantes*). He and Delacroix spent a lot of time there together, even attending dissections of animals that had died. On 18 June 1829, Delacroix sent a frantic note to Barye: "The lion is dead. Come at a gallop" (Delacroix 1935: 225). Barye's dedication to accurately representing what he observed anticipated Realism, but the savagery of the subject typifies Romanticism.

Figure 4.15

Antoine-Louis Barye, *Lion Crushing a Serpent*, 1833. Bronze (with base), 27 × 20 cm (10½ × 8 × 13½ in). The Brooklyn Museum, New York.



The hybrid character of *Lion Crushing a Serpent* evidenced a modernist disregard for categories. While the subject is similar to Stubbs's *Lion Attacking a Horse*, here there was a political message clear to contemporary viewers (as in Falconet's *Peter the Great*, Figure 3.4). The lion represents Leo, the zodiac sign in late July, when the Revolution of 1830 occurred. The lion symbolized Louis-Philippe and progressive political forces crushing the evil, opportunist government it replaced. Fascination with Sublime extremes and metaphysics represented part of Romanticism's range. For those seeking escape, the human imagination provided one option, as did conceptual escape into an idealized national past. For many, the Middle Ages functioned as a stabilizing mental destination in uncertain times.

ESCAPE TO THE NATIONAL PAST: ENGLAND

Beginning in the 1790s, the Middle Ages were celebrated in art and literature throughout Europe as a golden age when the Divine Right of Kings ruled benevolently over a humble Christian populace, artisans labored happily under the protection of their guilds, and chivalrous behavior and sentimental love were the order of the day. This fictionalized vision of the Middle Ages arose in direct response to chaotic contemporary conditions, and fulfilled the nostalgic fantasy for which so many longed. It functioned as a popular imaginary refuge for Europeans throughout the nineteenth century. Enthusiasm for a shared Greco-Roman heritage was damaged by Napoleon's failure to create a pan-European empire. His wars fostered xenophobic, anti-French sentiment throughout Europe. Looking to one's own national past for models of behavior and suitable subjects for art became more appealing than Greek and Roman antiquity.

In England, France, and Germany, the Middle Ages represented an era of stability, peace, piety, and cultural flowering that ended with the beginning of the Reformation in 1517, the year Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the doors of

Wittenberg Cathedral. For the French and Germans, the Middle Ages began in 800 with the crowning of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor, while for the British it began with the conquest of Normandy in 1066. These temporal parameters do not exactly coincide with the Gothic style, with which medievalism is associated, but people in the nineteenth century were not especially fussy about dates and styles. Gothic architecture developed first in Paris in the late twelfth century and was considered the first modern (non-ancient) architectural style. Its predecessor, Romanesque, evolved from round-arched Roman architecture and was thus unsuitable as a symbol for a “new” age. According to the German author Novalis (pen name of Philipp von Hardenberg, a geologist, intellectual, and writer), in *Christendom or Europe* (1799): “These were beautiful and glittering times when Europe was a Christian country...” (Novalis 1840: 161).

Although the Middle Ages served a common purpose, it was evoked at different moments and for slightly different reasons in various countries. In England, interest in the Middle Ages emerged in the 1760s, with the precocious efforts of a single individual, Horace Walpole, who wrote a medievalizing romance, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), and built a manor house in Twickenham—Strawberry Hill—with crenellated exterior walls, round towers, pointed windows, and elaborate fan vaulting on the ceilings—a hodge-podge of elements inspired by actual and imagined structures. British fascination with the Middle Ages escalated after the loss of American colonies in the 1780s. During that decade, George III commissioned Benjamin West to paint a series commemorating the victories of Edward III (1312–77) over the French in the Hundred Years’ War (1337–1453) for Windsor Castle. A decade later, William Beckford built his fantasy-filled Gothic homestead, Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire. During the eighteenth century, converts to Methodism (established by John Wesley in the 1730s) eroded the unity of the state Anglican Church and in the 1820s, the Oxford Movement sought to reform the Anglican Church along Catholic lines, making the religious unity of pre-Reformation Europe particularly appealing. Sir Walter Scott published a series of novels set in the Middle Ages, the most popular of which was *Ivanhoe* (1819), and in 1836, when London’s Houses of Parliament were destroyed by fire (recorded in paintings by Joseph Turner, an eyewitness), architects Charles Barry (1796–1860) and A.W.N. Pugin (1812–52) designed the present neo-Gothic structure.

Britain’s rivalry with France led to an urge to demonstrate not only economic and military supremacy, but also cultural superiority. Revived enthusiasm for the writings of William Shakespeare (1564–1616) comprised part of this search for excellence in British culture. Although France was acknowledged as Europe’s leader in theatrical (and all other cultural) productions, the rise of Anglo-French tensions, beginning with the Seven Years’ War, inspired theater companies to seek home-grown material that showed them equal if not superior to the French. Actor David Garrick (1717–79) entertained London audiences with his portrayals of Richard III, Macbeth, and King Lear. John Boydell, responding to this Shakespeare-mania, began in 1787 to commission artists such as West, Kauffmann, and James Barry to contribute to his Shakespeare Gallery, whose images circulated in popularly collected prints. Shakespeare’s writings contained a breadth of ideas that corresponded to the Romantic sensibility: his fantasy plays (*Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*) appealed to the imagination, while the histories and tragedies (*King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*) appealed to the Sublime. *Richard III* and *King Lear* transported audiences to

Figure 4.16

James Barry, *King Lear Weeping over the Dead Body of Cordelia*, 1786–88. Oil on canvas, 102 × 128 cm (40 × 50 in). Tate, London.



eras when the mythic authenticity of British history seemed to unfold. James Barry captured this tragic drama in *King Lear Weeping over the Dead Body of Cordelia* (1786–88, Figure 4.16). Barry, an Irish Catholic, studied at the Dublin Society of Arts, spent the years 1765–77 in Rome, and became a member of the RA, which later expelled him due to his fanatical behavior.

In *King Lear*, the King grieves over the limp corpse of his youngest daughter, murdered by an assassin hired by her jealous sister Regan. Lear holds with one arm his lifeless daughter, while grasping his head in a theatrical gesture of anguish with the other; mortally grief-stricken, Lear, too, will soon die. Barry set medievalizing costumes against a backdrop of megaliths evoking the mysterious, prehistoric Stonehenge, or a similar stone circle. A high wind dishevels only the long white hair of Lear as if triggered by his turbulent emotional state. Appreciation of Britain's past led to touristic interest in national historical sites and to a scientific interest in researching them.

MEDIEVALISM IN FRANCE: TROUBADOUR STYLE

In France, confiscation and destruction of church property and the suppression of the Roman Catholic Church during the Revolution disrupted the lives of citizens, who relied on it for spiritual guidance and social rituals. By the time Napoleon reinstated the Church with the Concordat of 1801 (with greatly diminished privileges), Frenchmen dreamed of an earlier, happier (if imaginary) time when kings ensured political stability and tranquility and the Church coordinated village life. François-René de Chateaubriand's popular *Genius of Christianity* (1802) and Troubadour artists evoked nostalgia for a medieval past, whose peacefulness and simplicity contrasted with life during the Napoleonic era. Alexandre Lenoir (1762–1839), an artist who rescued and collected deconsecrated and looted church property, contributed to awareness of France's Middle Ages in 1795 when he established the Museum of French Antiquities and Monuments. Noteworthy as the first chronologically organized museum, Lenoir's



Figure 4.17
Fleury Richard, *François I Presented as Child to Louis XII*, c. 1840. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Art Thomas Henry, Cherbourg.

museum housed masterpieces of French medieval art—from the stained glass windows of the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Près in Paris to the altarpieces of rural churches.

Two of David's pupils from France's second largest and most industrial city, Lyon, originated the Troubadour style. A hybrid of history and genre painting, the Troubadour style—named for medieval minstrels whose sung poetry-preserved ancient French legends—flourished between 1800 and 1830. Pierre Révoil (1776–1824) and Fleury Richard (1777–1852) were among the artists who portrayed medieval France as an era of peace and harmony in paintings like *François I Presented as Child to Louis XII* (Figure 4.17).

Here, Richard depicted a moment whose historical import could not have been predicted. Louis XII died without a direct male heir in 1515, and son-in-law François I succeeded him at the age of 21. The king tenderly embraces the boy in the presence of his mother in a palatial hall, whose only piece of furniture is the throne. Present are François I's future wife, Claude, and various courtiers. Louis XII focused on military expansion and was at constant war in Italy. The shift from the reign of Louis XII to François I marked the transition from the belligerent Middle Ages to the Renaissance, with its emphasis on culture and learning. François I enlarged the chateau and gardens of Fontainebleau, employed renowned Italian artists Benvenuto Cellini (1500–71), Andrea del Sarto (1486–1531), and Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519; who spent his final years employed by the king), established the art collection that would form the basis of the Louvre, and financed the expeditions of Verrazano and Cartier to North



Figure 4.18

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres,
The Vow of Louis XIII, 1824.
 Oil on canvas, 421 × 265 cm
 (13 ft 9 in × 8 ft 8 in).
 Cathedral of Notre-Dame,
 Montauban.

America. François I's irresponsible financial practices established a pattern that eventually destabilized the monarchy. In typical Troubadour style, Richard represented a moment when domestic and state concerns were inextricably entwined.

Ingres exploited the Bourbon Restoration's desire to reify its political control over an unwilling populace, while nodding to Troubadour impulse to celebrate the piety and order of earlier times, in his submission to the 1824 Salon, *The Vow of Louis XIII* (Figure 4.18). Here Ingres represented a legendary moment in the life of the seventeenth-century Bourbon king when he placed France under the protection of the Virgin of the Assumption. Shown in the ermine-lined, blue velvet and gold *fleur-de-lis* embroidered robe reserved for the French monarch, Louis XIII, despite his station, kneels humbly before a vision of the Virgin and offers her his crown and scepter, symbolizing the subordination of monarchy to divine law, and by extension the divinely invested right of Bourbon rule. Ingres distinguished between the earthly and divine realms in his stylistic approach: for the Virgin, he turned to Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* for an idealized image of divine perfection, and for Louis XIII, Ingres utilized the refined specificity of tangible detail learned from David and endorsed by the academy. Many of the nineteenth century's more innovative artworks (such as Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, Figure 11.6) also employed different styles in a single painting to indicate different geographical, psychological, or temporal zones.



To find out what Stendhal thought of *The Vow of Louis XIII* when he saw it at the 1824 Salon go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos



Figure 4.19

Félice de Fauveau, *Christina of Sweden Refusing to Spare the Life of Her Equerry, Monaldeschi*, 1827. Terra cotta. Musée de Louviers.

Vigée-LeBrun's portrait of Marie-Antoinette (Figure 1.7) anticipated the trend to reveal the human side of prominent personalities, which became popular in Troubadour and later nineteenth-century art. Félice de Fauveau (1801–66), who remained unmarried to pursue her artistic career unhindered (she may also have been a lesbian), also showed this more intimate side of royalty in her sculpture *Christina of Sweden Refusing to Spare the Life of Her Equerry, Monaldeschi* (Figure 4.19), which won a medal at the 1827 Salon. Fauveau imagines a moment in the life of the seventeenth-century Swedish monarch who converted from Lutheranism to Catholicism, abdicated her throne, and moved to Rome. Queen Christina is represented at a resolute moment—refusing to pardon her lover-betrayer who divulged to Spain her plans forged with the help of the French, to become Queen of Naples. As in Richard's painting, the ruler is not the sole focal point, and the entire scene has a domestic quality characterized by detailed realism and historically accurate costumes. As an aristocrat who had royalist sympathies, Fauveau spent much of her life in exile in Florence, where she was born, and it was only after the death of her traditionalist father in 1824 that she pursued a professional career as an artist. Despite her absence, she participated in Parisian exhibitions, including the Salons of 1842 and 1852, and the 1855 Exposition universelle (world's fair).

MEDIEVALISM IN THE GERMAN STATES

In the German states, interest in the Middle Ages emerged in direct reaction to war with France. Operating from an oversimplified and not completely accurate picture that functioned well for propagandistic purposes, the French were envisioned as aggressive, arrogant, rational, materialistic, and Catholic, whereas Germans were

considered passive, humble, pious, spiritual, and Protestant. The largest political units of the German-speaking world—Austria (Catholic), Bavaria (Catholic), and Prussia (Lutheran)—began the Napoleonic era as rivals, and the rest of Germany was divided into a confusing array of several hundred self-governing entities, from the independent cities of Hamburg and Lübeck, ruled by elected city councils, to feudal states such as Wied and independent monasteries like Elchingen. Napoleon consolidated these into 38 political units, a process inadvertently facilitating unification into a German Empire, formed in 1870 under the leadership of Prussia's Wilhelm I.

In order to find a political model appropriate for contemporary conditions, intellectuals turned to the Middle Ages, an era when Germans were politically united during the Holy Roman Empire (800–1648), spiritually united under the uncorrupted pre-Reformation Roman Catholic Church, and socially united under the guild system, a union-like structure promoting professional solidarity and uniform work standards. Ignoring the actualities of famine, oppression, plague, and war, Germans viewed the Middle Ages with unrealistic optimism and nostalgia, motivated by a desperate desire to find a solution for modern Germans. The Middle Ages prevailed as the major symbol of a prosperous, harmonious, and German nation throughout the nineteenth century.

This perception emerged in contemporary writings, including Goethe's 1773 essay "On German Architecture," in which he proclaimed Strasbourg Cathedral (located in the contested region of Alsace, then under German control) a brilliant translation into stone of the soaring firs of the German forest. Subsequently, Novalis's *Christendom or Europe* called for a religious revival in Germany as a prerequisite for social and political change, and both Ludwig Tieck's *The Wanderings of Franz Sternbald: An Old German Story* (1798) and Wilhelm Wackenroder's *Outpourings from the Heart of an Art-Loving Monk* (written in 1797, the year before his death at age 25) celebrated the German Middle Ages. *Outpourings* had an enormous impact on German artists and intellectuals. Set in the eighteenth century, the fictional author is a monk who looks nostalgically back to the Middle Ages, while articulating key Romantic ideas. The monk asserts that emotion is the most important content of art—"Art can be called the flower of human feeling"—and that creativity is a divine gift in the form of genius or inspiration that manifests itself in infinite ways (a divine explanation for diversity) and burdens the artist with the responsibility of using it for the benefit of humankind. Contrary to the Neoclassical principle that ancient art is superior, Wackenroder pleaded for tolerance, arguing that the production of one culture cannot be judged by the values of another: "To Him, the Gothic temple is as pleasing as the Greek temple, and the primitive war chants of the savages are as melodious as the artistic choruses and hymns of the church" (Wackenroder 1797: 44).

The narrator also regarded the Middle Ages as a refuge for Germans:

Nürnberg, you once world-famous city—how I love to stroll your winding lanes, with what child-like affection I looked at your old-fashioned houses and churches, which are impressed with clear traces of our old, native art! How dearly I love the works of those times that speak such a strong, honest language! How they take me back into that gray century when you, Nürnberg were the inspirational school of our national art and a fertile, productive spirit of art lived and created within your walls, when ... Albrecht Dürer was alive!"

(Wackenroder 1797: 47)



Figure 4.20
Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *A Medieval City on a River*, 1815.
Oil on canvas, 90 × 140 cm
(2 ft 11½ in × 4 ft 7 in).
Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), a native of Nuremberg and the most revered of German artists, inspired a cult in the nineteenth century. Annual celebrations of his birthday began in 1856 under the sponsorship of the newly founded German Artists' Guild. For many, Dürer epitomized Germanness and originated a uniquely German style of art, the fulfillment during the Renaissance (c. 1400–1550) of the spiritual and cultural development of art initiated during the Gothic era.

Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841) was an architect, painter, and set designer. He studied architecture at the Royal Academy in Berlin and because there were few architectural commissions during the Napoleonic era, Schinkel turned to set design. The fantastic scale Schinkel adopted in backdrops for operas like Mozart's *Magic Flute* (1815–16) emerged in paintings such as *A Medieval City on a River* (Figure 4.20), a painting that looks like a simple historical landscape, but has several layers of meaning. While the botanical and architectural details suggest a real place, the scene is imaginary. There are many German towns along rivers and many Gothic cathedrals, but none have this particular configuration, not to mention scale, although Schinkel created a convincing initial impression of reality. The disproportionately large cathedral becomes the focal point, despite its off-center placement. The miniature participants in the procession are dressed in medieval costumes, and the ambiguous narrative appears to have something to do with a royal or religious procession, an interpretation suggested by the presence of a red-caped, fur-collared dignitary riding beneath a blue canopy on an equally elaborately dressed horse. Illuminated by a seemingly divine light and encircled by a rainbow after a storm, Schinkel signaled the centrality of the church, as a place and an institution, in medieval life. Because of its date, 1815, the painting can also be interpreted as a symbol of the reemergence of the German people following Napoleonic domination. Like the cathedral, the forest of ancient, gnarled oaks in the right foreground has also survived the storm. In *Medieval City*, Schinkel anticipated the festival of German unity held in Wartburg in 1817 to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Reformation.

THE NAZARENES

A group of Vienna Academy students who objected to the Academy's mission to serve the Austrian emperor and his court—Zauner and Füger were the primary instructors—and to teaching methods imported from France, began meeting in 1808. They established the Brotherhood of St Luke in July 1809, named after the Roman Academy of St Luke but based on their own vision of medieval artist guilds. Motivated partly by a rejection of things French (including academic training and the classical ideal, but not Catholicism) at a time when Napoleonic troops were ravaging the countryside of Central and Eastern Europe, the Brotherhood embraced German and Italian Medieval and Renaissance art, up to the eras of Dürer and Raphael, as their artistic models.

In 1799 Goethe attempted to free German art from the domination of Paris and Rome by establishing a drawing contest. Goethe hoped the Friends of Art (*Kunstfreunde*) competition would encourage development of a uniquely German Neoclassical style, a goal championed by his short-lived journal, *Propaläen* (1798–1800). Despite similar objectives, the ideals of Goethe and the Nazarenes were different. Like French Troubadour artists, the Brotherhood viewed these earlier times as ones of piety and harmony, an assessment anticipated by Wackenroder, who in *Outpourings* expressed concerns shared by the Brotherhood:

When Albrecht Dürer wielded his brush, a solid, individual character distinguished the Germans among the peoples of this part of the world. His paintings express this honest seriousness and strength of the German character faithfully, not only in the faces and outward traits, but also in their innermost spirit. In our time, this distinctive German character has become lost, and along with it, German art itself.

(Wackenroder 1797: 51)

The Brotherhood met six times a month, comparing sketches on assigned subjects, critiquing each others' work, or sometimes just discussing art and politics. United in their fervor to restore German art and identity, they departed for Rome in 1810, installing themselves in the abandoned monastery of St Isidoro and modeling their behavior on Renaissance artist-monks like Fra Angelico. They took vows of chastity and poverty, grew their hair long, and wore robes and sandals, which caused people to call them Nazarenes, because they evoked Jesus of Nazareth. The Nazarenes' rejection of contemporary norms perceived as corrupt was anticipated in the 1790s by a group of David students known as the Bearded Ones (*Les Barbus*). The Bearded Ones embraced Republican ideals, moralizing subjects, and lived exemplary lives devoid of frivolities like shaving. This banding together of young artists committed to a cause signaled a shift in the way artists envisioned their identity. An independent organization formed by artists for aesthetic, financial, and moral support would have been inconceivable before the French Revolution; it marked the formation of a modern artistic identity independent of existing institutions. Such associations arose with increasing frequency during the nineteenth century, and included the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the Impressionists, the Nabis, Sztuka, and The Wanderers.

The Nazarenes recognized multiple valid paths for artists. In his essay "The Three Ways of Art," written in 1810, Brother Friedrich Overbeck distilled these to three basic categories: fantasy, epitomized by Michelangelo; beauty, epitomized by



Figure 4.21
 Franz Pforr, *Entrance of Emperor Rudolf into Basel in 1273*, 1808–10. Oil on canvas, 91 × 119 cm (2 ft 11½ in × 3 ft 10¾ in). Historisches Museum, Frankfurt.

Raphael; and nature, epitomized by Dürer. Brother Franz Pforr (1788–1812) was particularly interested in history painting. His *Entrance of Emperor Rudolf into Basel in 1273* (Figure 4.21) shows the first Hapsburg king (who established the dynasty ruling Austria until the twentieth century) arriving in Basel during his campaign to consolidate control over lands in present-day Switzerland, Germany, Bohemia, and Austria. Inhabitants welcome Rudolf I, a Swiss count elected emperor in 1273 with the support of Pope Gregory X following an unstable two decades without either a German king or a Holy Roman Emperor. Rudolf's entry into Basel represented a triumphal return to his native region. Pforr's painting is more modest in scale than typical academic history paintings, its size suitable for a middle-class living room. The scene is crowded with figures, consistent with the actual event, and the costumes are rendered with historical precision. While Rudolf I's centrality to the narrative is indicated by his compositional placement, he is rendered with the same painstaking detail and miniature scale as the rest of the scene, an approach to painting similar to that found in illuminated manuscripts.

The Nazarenes' goal was to reform German art and, through it, a corrupt, feudal German society. They believed in art's ability to affect the minds and feelings of its viewers. The Nazarenes admired the Middle Ages and Renaissance eras when painting, sculpture, and architecture enjoyed equal status and were harmoniously and democratically integrated in a manner reflecting the cooperative and ordered societies that produced them. Their reformatory aspirations led the Nazarenes to dream of producing monumental public art. An opportunity was presented in 1816 by the Prussian consul to Rome, Salomon Bartholdy, who hired the Nazarenes to paint scenes from the story of Joseph—as told in the first book of the Old Testament, Genesis—in his Roman residence, Casa Bartholdy. Five artists worked on the commission (since removed to the Nationalgalerie in Berlin), including Overbeck (1789–1869), who painted *Joseph Sold by His Brothers* (Figure 4.22). The first son of Jacob and Rachael,

Figure 4.22

Friedrich Overbeck,
Joseph Sold by His Brothers,
1816–17. Fresco and tempera,
243 × 304 cm (8 × 10 ft).
Nationalgalerie, Berlin.



Joseph was a good boy and his father's favorite, eliciting the jealousy of his ten older brothers from a prior marriage. In this era before family therapy, the brothers took matters into their own hands. They took Joseph to Egypt and sold him into slavery, explaining to Jacob and Rachel that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. Remarkably, Joseph had a happy life, became the pharaoh's advisor, saved Egypt from a seven-year famine, and eventually reunited with his father.

Rather than emulating medieval models, the Casa Bartholdy paintings drew inspiration from the Vatican frescoes of Raphael in both style and technique. Fresco painting was common during the Renaissance, but lost favor with the advent of portable oil painting on canvas in the mid-sixteenth century. The Nazarenes revived the ancient technique of fresco, which required careful preparation and quick execution, since the artist painted on wet plaster, and once dried, changes could not be made. The advantage of fresco, however, was its permanence—the paint bonded chemically to the wall and the colors did not fade over time. Bartholdy opened doors to a variety of opportunities for the Nazarenes, and their aspiration of filling Germany's public buildings with monumental art was on the road to realization. Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794–1872) and Peter Cornelius (1824–74) were hired by Ludwig I, King of Bavaria, during his 1818 visit to Rome, to decorate the palaces, churches, museums and libraries he was building as part of an enormous campaign to secure Munich's position as an enlightened culture capital. He had already purchased Cardinal Albani's collection of ancient art, and installed it in a special museum decorated by Cornelius, the Glyptothek (1820–30), and tried unsuccessfully to acquire the Elgin Marbles. Schnorr von Carolsfeld painted scenes from the German national epic, the *Nibelungenlied* (Song of the Nibelungs, thirteenth century) in the royal palace (1826–35), and Cornelius reinterpreted Giotto's Arena Chapel (c. 1305) and Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel *Last Judgment* (1537–41) in a fresco for the Ludwigskirche (1839). As the group slowly dispersed following the drowning death of Pforr in 1812, most of the Nazarenes

returned to Germany. They assumed influential posts in courts and academies, exerting a major influence on the subsequent generation of German artists.

CONCLUSION

Although Neoclassicism and Romanticism differ in subject matter, composition, and content, both emerged in the 1760s as divergent responses to transformations gathering momentum at the end of the eighteenth century. Neoclassicism expressed a relatively uncomplicated outlook that deferred to authority, looked to classical antiquity for inspiration, promoted a single style characterized by precise detail and clear compositions, and was grounded in an Enlightenment trust in empirical observation and rational analysis. Rulers and academies favored Neoclassicism because it exemplified stability and control. Romanticism, in contrast, was an anti-establishment movement that reflected modern ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty. It was modern because it privileged individualism and encouraged artists to express their ideas and experiences without regard for convention.

Romanticism is difficult to define, because it functions as an umbrella concept for various, even conflicting, impulses. If one considers three elements of an artwork: subject, composition, and content, certain generalizations do emerge, however. Regarding subject matter, instead of Neoclassicism's veneration of Greco-Roman antiquity, Romanticism tended to look to the national past, particularly the Middle Ages, for inspiring subjects. Instead of the distilled, rigid simplicity of Neoclassical compositions, Romantic ones often include more characters and more movement. And instead of blind obedience to higher authority, individuals and their feelings play a larger role. Romantic values infused all subsequent nineteenth-century art movements to some degree, particularly in the agency given to individual experiences and ideas.

For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.



Shifting Focus: Art and the Natural World

A new awareness of nature began evolving in the mid-eighteenth century, becoming widespread in the nineteenth. This awareness was facilitated by a variety of factors, especially religion and science, but also industrialization, tourism, urbanization, and war. Enlightenment emphasis on empirical observation and rational analysis gave nature new significance, and the urge to understand it excited a broadening public, as evidenced by Wright of Derby's *Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (Figure 1.8). Enlightenment empiricism applied to religion led many to abandon superstition and faith, seeking instead rational explanations for metaphysical questions. This occurred predominantly in Protestant regions, since Anglican and especially Lutheran belief predisposed individuals to doubt authority and question dogma. One result of this was pantheism, a belief that God and nature are identical.

NEW ATTITUDES TOWARD NATURE

Artists had always sketched outdoors, gathering components for larger, painted compositions, but artists and amateurs alike took increasing pleasure in nature for various reasons depending on their disposition, experience, and values: closer acquaintance with God and divine creation, emotional or psychological serenity, connectedness to an idyllic national or childhood past, or documentation of the ever-changing visual world with its optical and atmospheric nuances. Art academies took a similar approach to landscape painting as they did to history painting: observe the world carefully and assemble its most perfect parts into an ideal composition. In the late eighteenth century, however, two alternative approaches developed, the Sublime (based on the ideas of Burke) and the Picturesque. While the Sublime sought to stimulate a strong emotional response and metaphysical reflection, the Picturesque appealed to simple delight in the accidents and irregularities of nature. These contrasting attitudes informed the evolution of new approaches to nature including Naturalism and Impressionism (Chapter 12).

The Industrial Revolution triggered the biggest transformation in human culture since the prehistoric shift from hunting to agriculture. It generated drastic changes in everyday life and in people's attitudes. Industrialization combined with the transformation of land from inherited property to cash commodity to dramatically



Figure 5.1
Philip de Loutherbourg,
Coalbrookdale at Night, 1801.
Oil on canvas, 68 × 107 cm
(26¾ × 42 in). Science
Museum, London.

alter the way people thought about nature. Industrialism affected the landscape itself, as well as people's ideas about it. Although industrialization was new, artists first represented it in terms of existing categories, especially Burke's "Sublime Horrific." Industrial buildings, noise, pollution, and waste products disfigured the landscape, as evidenced in *Coalbrookdale at Night* (Figure 5.1), a spooky, nocturnal vision by Philip de Loutherbourg (1740–1812). It depicts the Shropshire iron factory where Abraham Darby discovered how to smelt iron ore with coke instead of charcoal, a less expensive, more efficient process. The glowing furnaces illuminate the night like an artificial sun. While this dramatic vision might strike viewers as either marvelous or satanic, the pyrotechnics divert attention from the unsightly slagheap in the foreground (whose runoff drained into the Severn River), presenting the scene more advantageously than would a daytime view.

Suddenly, land no longer represented merely a family heirloom (for aristocrats) or a source of communal survival (for peasants), but also a commodity with a price tag. First in England, then elsewhere in Europe, village pastures and woodlands were divided and privatized, and small, scattered plots of farmed land, consolidated. The fortunate were resettled on individual plots not always sufficient for survival, in which case they sold to larger landholders who bought up all available land. In 1700, farmers owned 30 percent of England's land, but by 1800, they owned only six percent, a number remaining constant throughout the nineteenth century. This meant that farmers were forced off their land to sell their labor for money. They worked as tenant farmers who rented land, as migrant workers on large estates, or as unskilled workers in the city (proletariat). In France and the lands controlled by Napoleon, church property was confiscated and sold, enabling those with savings to purchase large tracts of fertile agricultural land. Although this provided economic opportunities for the independent farmers fortunate enough to have savings, it did not alter the miserable condition of landless peasants.

Changes in agricultural practice increased the efficiency of production and therefore the wealth of landowners. In 1700, it took 100 farmers to feed 182 people in Britain (158 in France), whereas by 1800, 100 farmers could feed 276 people in Britain

(170 in France), indicative of the rapidity of improvements in British agriculture. Crop rotation, switching from oxen to horses, and planting corn and potatoes (crops imported from North America) enabled British farmers to feed more people per acre than farmers in any other European nation. Potatoes were particularly important on the war-torn continent—growing underground, they were resistant to ravenous insects and armies.

For the thousands moving to cities (usually against their will), the urban environment—filthy, noisy, dark, dangerous, crowded, artificial—contrasted with memories of the native village—quiet, healthy, safe, spacious, and surrounded by nature—which grew more idyllic the longer people were separated from it. The sinister vision of the city was confirmed by actuarial statistics—life expectancy for peasants was almost twice that of urbanites, and rich three times that of poor. Twenty percent of British cities had more than 10,000 inhabitants in 1800, whereas only ten percent of continental cities did. In London alone, the population grew from 600,000 in 1700 to over one million by 1800, 2.3 million by 1850, and 4.5 million by 1900, a drastic increase with which the urban infrastructure was unable to keep pace.

For France's literate minority, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's numerous writings about the wholesome aspects of nature stimulated an appreciation of landscape. In his novel *The New Heloise* (1761), for instance, Rousseau described how cheerful, innocent peasants went to bed happy after a day of hard working, an attitude often conveyed in the landscapes of Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes. In *Émile* (1762), Rousseau declared nature an important teacher, both intellectually and physically, asserting that "The eternal laws of nature and order have a real existence. For the wise they serve as positive laws, and they are engraved on the innermost tablets of the heart by both conscience and reason" (<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs./etext04/emile10.txt>). Rousseau's *Confessions* (1770) and *Reflections of a Solitary Walker* (1780) recorded his subjective response to solitary experiences in nature and played a crucial role in forming the Romantic attitude, in which individuals derived personal satisfaction and spiritual enlightenment through direct contact with nature.

ACADEMIC LANDSCAPE TRADITION

The academic standard for landscape painting, the "classical landscape formula," was based on the paintings of the French artists Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain (1605–82). They worked in Rome during the seventeenth century and depicted conventional history painting subjects in appropriate natural settings. In order to ennoble nature and make it worthy of representing on canvas, a recognizable narrative, or at least a human presence, was essential. Typical of these was Poussin's *Landscape with Orpheus and Eurydice* (1648, Louvre; in the French royal collection since 1685). It has a mythological incident in the foreground, framed by larger, dark entities such as trees or rocks. A stream or path gently leads the viewer's eye into the middle ground, occupied by an architectural formation—a town or castle (here, Rome's Castel Sant'Angelo)—and then further into the background, where mountains or the sea appear, veiled in the bluish tones of the far distance. Foreground objects appear largest, and movement into the distance is measured and rational.

In the eighteenth century the authority of tradition encouraged artists interested in simply recording nature as they found it to justify their informal images



Figure 5.2
 Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, *The Ancient City of Agrigentum*, 1787.
 Oil on canvas, 110 × 164 cm
 (3 ft 9¼ in × 5 ft 4½ in).
 Musée du Louvre, Paris.

by references to respected predecessors. Thus, Valenciennes (1750–1819) asserted that Poussin was

immersed in the reading of these sublime poets [Homer, Virgil, Theocritus], [he] meditated on them, and when [he] closed his eyes [he] saw that ideal nature, that nature ornamented with the riches of the imagination and that only the genius can conceive and represent.

(Valenciennes 2003: 71)

Valenciennes lived in Rome for most of the 1780s, taught at the *École Royale*, and lobbied for a *Prix de Rome* for landscape painting, which was first awarded in 1821. *The Ancient City of Agrigentum* (1787, Figure 5.2) typifies the scenes Valenciennes popularized by combining the classical landscape formula with genre subjects: “Outdoor studies do not form the paintings; one keeps them in one’s portfolio in order to consult them” (Valenciennes 2003: 25). Here, strollers meet while youths play by the shore. A dark mass consisting of a dilapidated wall and trees closes the scene on the left, and the viewer’s eye is led into the middle ground by a paved Roman road (paved roads were rare in the eighteenth century) leading to the river, which provides a transition to the background with its formidable mountains. Ruins in the foreground contrast with the ancient city in the middle ground. Valenciennes’s imaginary landscapes did not burden his clientele with the challenge of trying to identify an historical event or a specific location, but instead catered to their aesthetic enjoyment.

Joseph Anton Koch (1768–1839) began life as a Bavarian shepherd boy, but his artistic talent attracted the attention of the Bishop of Augsburg, who paid for his early art studies. Koch studied at the *Karlsschule* in Stuttgart (1785–91) with David’s student Philip von Hetsch (Figure 2.15). Bored by history painting and uninspired academic teaching, Koch departed on a three-year sojourn in Switzerland, where he concentrated on his passion—landscape painting. A timely stipend from a sympathetic British patron whom he met in Switzerland, Dr George Nott, enabled Koch to move to Rome in 1795, where he joined the expatriate artist community (although in protest of the French occupation of Rome, Koch spent 1812–15 in

Figure 5.3

Joseph Anton Koch, *Apollo and the Thessalonian Shepherds*, 1835. Oil on canvas, 79 × 116 cm (31 × 45 5/8 in). Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.



Vienna). In his landscapes, Koch combined scientific accuracy in the depiction of botanical specimens and geological formations with the classical landscape formula of Poussin and Claude and the minute detail of David. Koch believed in a divine order in nature, which he communicated through the exaggeration of order in his compositions. His ideal vision contrasted dramatically with the actual chaos reigning in the landscape at the time, as French armies engaged other European powers in battles throughout the continent.

Koch imagined Arcadia, a region of Greece renowned for its idyllic, pastoral lifestyle, in his painting *Apollo and the Thessalonian Shepherds* (1835, Figure 5.3). In this painting, purchased in Rome by sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, Apollo, the god of beauty, music, and poetry entertains shepherds. Across the way, Pan, his mischievous counterpart, frolics with fauns, nymphs, and satyrs. While *Apollo and the Thessalonian Shepherds* conforms generally to the classical formula, it also evidences Koch's signature style: a composition of discreet, interlocking spatial envelopes, whose objects diminish in scale as they recede into the background. This reinforces the purpose of the painting: revelation of divine order in nature. Koch recorded vegetation with botanical exactitude, evidence of his interest in closely observing and recording the natural world. Despite its artifice in subject and composition, *Apollo and the Thessalonian Shepherds* appears far more natural than Mengs's earlier depiction of Apollo (Figure 1.16).

NATURE AND THE SUBLIME

Travel, especially over the Alps, heightened travelers' sensitivity to the natural world. People noticed a lot about their surroundings as they either walked or traveled by horse-drawn coach through the countryside. Switzerland's landscape, previously dreaded as an obstacle, became a sublime experience to enjoy and a physical challenge to savor. The Alps met the criteria of Burke's Sublime: vast, terrifying, and dangerous. In the nineteenth century, there were few convenient routes through the mountains. One of the most dramatic was undoubtedly via Devil's Bridge, recorded in sketches



Figure 5.4
Joseph M.W. Turner, *The Devil's Bridge*, 1802. Watercolor on paper. Private Collection.

by artists and amateurs from all over Europe, including Joseph Turner (1802, Figure 5.4). According to a legend collected by the Grimm brothers (Jacob and Wilhelm), a shepherd once stood on a precipice overlooking the Reuss River, which separated him from his girlfriend. He wished for a bridge that would enable him to avoid the otherwise long journey to visit her. The Devil responded by building a bridge, payment for which was the first living creature to cross it. The clever shepherd chased a deer across it, angering the Devil, who nevertheless kept his promise and left the bridge standing. The narrow stone bridge was built in the sixteenth century, and Turner made a watercolor painting of it during his first continental visit in 1802 (that brief peaceful moment in Anglo–French relations). Three years earlier, this was the site where 80,000 of Napoleon's troops sent Russian General Alexander Suvorov fleeing with his 18,000 men, 2,000 of whom fell to their death, froze to death, or starved during their hasty retreat. Turner painted the bridge from the viewpoint of one hovering in thin air above the bottomless chasm of the St Gotthard Pass. Turner captured the exhilarating, treacherous, and terrifying feeling undoubtedly experienced by Grand Tourists before him.

Another sublime experience awaiting Grand Tourists was Vesuvius. Several decades after the commencement of excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum, Vesuvius erupted on a regular basis just as tourists began regularly visiting the area. These incidents seemed to offer geological confirmation of Burke's Sublime and affirmation that some aspects of nature were beyond human control. Most landscape artists visiting Italy between the 1770s and 1820s sketched the volcano, which had

Figure 5.5
Joseph Wright of Derby,
Eruption of Vesuvius, 1776. Oil
on canvas. Private Collection.



been dormant between 1037 and 1631, but which had erupted periodically since. Joseph Wright of Derby witnessed its eruption in October 1774. He made more than 30 paintings of it during the next 20 years, attesting to the fascination this subject had for British audiences. Undoubtedly influenced by Burke's description of the Sublime when he painted *Eruption of Vesuvius*, Wright of Derby recorded the volcano in an eerie, nocturnal setting (Figure 5.5). The viewer experiences a thrill of fear realizing that the village at the foot of the volcano lies in immediate danger. Wright of Derby's image also reminded viewers of the 79 eruption that destroyed the two ancient cities. If the thoughts of British viewers wandered to contemporary events, they might draw a parallel with rising tensions in the American colonies on the verge of revolt following the Boston Massacre (1770) and Boston Tea Party (1773). The ideas and emotions stirred in *Eruption of Vesuvius* were Romantic.

When war with France made access to the continent difficult, beginning in the 1790s, British artists sought similar visual experiences at home. The resulting images both promoted and were inspired by a sense of nationalism that had grown steadily during the eighteenth century, when England and France were in near-constant conflict and the humiliating loss of the American colonies was formalized by the Treaty of Versailles (1783). Landscape enthusiasts discovered that the search for beauty and sublimity that had taken many Britons to the Continent existed at home. This led to a feeling of pride in Britain's nature and history. The sublimity of the Alps, for instance, was comparable to the Welsh mountains, the Scottish Highlands, or England's Lake District.

THE PICTURESQUE

"Picturesque" developed a special meaning in the late eighteenth century. For William Gilpin (1724–1804), it referred to the rugged and varied terrain typical of England appropriate for recording without embellishment. Gilpin explained his ideas in *Observations Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (1786), used by writers

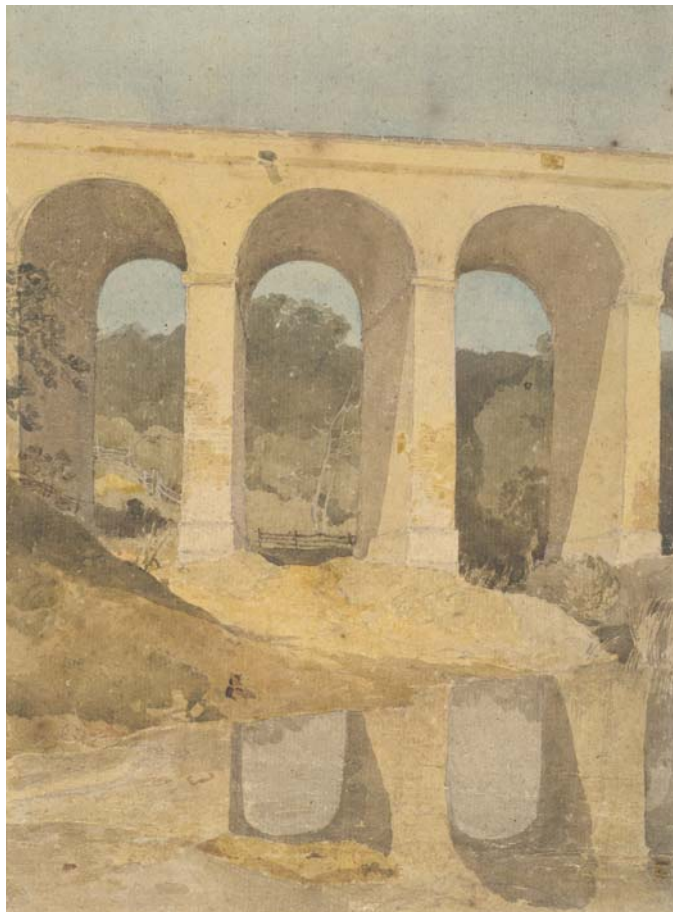


Figure 5.6

John Sell Cotman, *Chirk Aqueduct*, c.1806–07. Watercolor, 32 x 23 cm (12½ x 9 in). Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

and painters as a guide to natural beauty. Gilpin proposed Picturesque as a third category of landscape painting because it differed from Burke's Sublime and the classical landscape formula. Picturesque artists searched nature for lovely views (Gilpin considered these morally uplifting) and recorded them faithfully enough that viewers recognized them as truthful.

John Sell Cotman (1782–1842) responded to the heightened sense of homeland pride emerging in the 1790s. Primarily self-taught, Cotman worked as a drawing teacher, watercolorist, and printmaker, specializing in landscape. Although an inhabitant of the provincial capital of Norwich, East Anglia, Cotman traveled extensively in Britain on painting expeditions during the summers, and his watercolors were popular with collectors. Those less affluent could purchase etchings, often issued in sets of views of a particular region. *Chirk Aqueduct* (c.1806–07, Figure 5.6), a water conduit in Wales, was situated near a twelfth-century castle built by Edward I and a well-preserved medieval town. These became popular attractions, as tourism developed due to increasing accessibility to rural sites. Tourism was facilitated by improved roads, construction of railroads (beginning in the 1820s), and the increasing affluence of the British middle classes. Although completed in 1801 as part of the canal infrastructure built to support industrialization (it was large enough for barges), Chirk Aqueduct looks as if it could be a relic from an ancient Roman settlement. Cotman achieved this impression by omitting signs of human activity and integrating

the structure into its setting. Nonetheless, contemporary British viewers would have recognized Chirk Aqueduct as a modern British technological marvel. Cotman shunned the classical landscape formula partly as a rejection of French values, partly in search of a suitable visual language.

Year	1830	1840	1900
Austria-Hungary		100/161	22,700/35,532
Belgium		200/322	2,900/4,667
France		300/483	23,800/38,302
Germany		300/483	32,300/51,982
Great Britain	95/153	1500/2,414	18,800/30,256
Italy		10/16	10,300/16,576
Russia		15/24	48,000/77,249
Sweden		0	7,100/11,426
Europe		2,450/3,943	181,800/292,579
US	40/64	2,800/4,506	184,500/296,924

Data Box 5: Railways in Nineteenth-century Europe*

*Approximate length of track in miles/kilometers

TURNER: FROM CONVENTION TO INNOVATION

Joseph M.W. Turner (1775–1851) was among the most original of nineteenth-century landscape painters. Inspired by Burke’s *Sublime*, Turner created evocative visual equivalents for physical and perceptual experiences in nature. Although Turner studied at the Royal Academy from 1789 to 1793, he also enjoyed sketching outdoors and during his career made hiking excursions to England, Wales, Italy, France, and Switzerland. In late eighteenth-century Britain, topographical painting was in high demand because landowners wanted portraits of their property, as well as of their families and pets. Topographical painting was Turner’s bread-and-butter for much of his career, just as portraiture was for Goya, David, and Ingres. By 1796, when Turner submitted his first oil painting to the RA, *Fishermen at Sea* (Tate, London), he had a lucrative career as a topographical painter, and in 1799, he was the youngest member ever elected to the RA.

Turner was a savvy businessman in a world where patronage from church and state was waning. In addition to topographical painting, Turner opened a gallery, operated by his father in his London home. There Turner sold watercolors, oil paintings, and prints. Turner further supplemented his income from 1807 until 1837 by lecturing at the RA and had a circle of loyal patrons, some of whom owned as many as 200 of his works. These patrons included the liberal politician Walter Fawkes, the eccentric millionaire William Beckford, and George Wyndham, Third Earl of Egremont.

Turner kept a high public profile by exhibiting regularly at the RA, and since history painting continued as the most prestigious painting category, Turner submitted landscapes with historical motifs. He showed *Snow Storm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps* (Figure 5.7) at the 1812 RA exhibition. Like Benjamin West, Turner



Figure 5.7

Joseph M.W. Turner, *Snow Storm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps*, exhibited 1812. Oil on canvas, 146 × 238 cm (4 ft 9 in × 7 ft 9 in). Tate, London.

went to Paris in 1802 and visited nearby Versailles. There, he saw David's *Napoleon at the St Bernard Pass* (Figure 3.5) with Hannibal's name inscribed on a rock, which may have inspired Turner. *Snow Storm* also incorporated another layer of meaning: a warning to Britain about the menace posed by Napoleon, whom Turner identified with Hannibal. The scene itself was motivated by a storm Turner witnessed in 1810. At that time he remarked to his host: "in two years you will see this again, and call it 'Hannibal Crossing the Alps!'" (Walker 1976: 88). By the time *Snow Storm* was exhibited in Spring 1812, the United States had declared war on Britain, giving the foreground scene of violent pillaging particular relevance to a Britain threatened from enemies east and west.

The radically innovative character of this, Turner's first swirling vortex composition, becomes clear when compared with contemporaneous landscapes by Constable, Koch, or Valenciennes. Turner wanted to convey the turbulence of the 1810 storm in such a way that his audience would understand the artist's on-the-spot experience. To accomplish this, Turner abandoned Poussin's formula—designed to represent an ideal world—in favor of a wild, chaotic composition in which the forces of nature dwarf human activity. Instead of the minute, brushless detail favored by academic artists, Turner painted thickly and coarsely in a kind of painterly equivalent to meteorological conditions. The result was an apocalyptic vision that some viewers thought evoked the end of the world. To Delacroix, this kind of originality constituted genius, which he defined as "that delicacy of the organs that makes one see what others do not, and which makes one see in a different way" (Delacroix 1938: 28).

An avid traveler, Turner's life was transformed by the rapid spread of railroads, developed to expedite transportation of goods and raw materials. Railroads enabled industrialization and urbanization to proceed at the dizzying pace they did during the nineteenth century. The mechanized speed associated with modernity came via the railroad. While many were exhilarated by trains, many saw drawbacks. In an 1844 letter to the editor of *The Morning Post*, British poet William Wordsworth complained about "the intrusion of a railway with its scarifications, its intersections, its noisy machinery, its smoke, and swarms of pleasure-hunters, most of them thinking that



To compare scholarly interpretations of *Snow Storm* go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

Figure 5.8

Joseph M.W. Turner, *Rain, Steam, and Speed—The Great Western Railway*, 1844.
Oil on canvas, 91 × 122
(35⅞ × 49 in). The National
Gallery, London.



they do not fly fast enough through the country[side] which they have come to see...” (Harrison, *et. al.* 1998: 220).

Turner sought to create a visual equivalent for weather, combustion, and movement in *Rain, Steam, and Speed—The Great Western Railway* (Figure 5.8), exhibited at the RA in 1844, the same year the Great Western Railroad Company opened its route from Bristol to Exeter. Although a recognizable spot—the new railroad bridge at Maidenhead—and the most modern class of locomotive—the “Firefly”—Turner painted this, as all of his landscapes, from memory. He felt, as did Gauguin later (Chapter 13), that this was the best way to distill numerous impressions, sensory and visual, into a coherent whole. But with memory comes distortion, and Turner took liberties with his subject in order to convey the desired effect. For instance, the Maidenhead Bridge had two tracks (one of which Turner omitted in order to center the train) and the viewer is situated at a vantage point hovering in mid-air and outside the train. Turner painted a hare (common in the British countryside) scooting ahead and in the path of the train, suggesting that these powerful engines moved less rapidly than we might imagine. Turner contrasted this modern, mechanized, metallic machine with the small wooden boat below, occupied by a single rower-passenger. The old fades into the distance while the new catapults itself aggressively into the future. In *Rain, Steam and Speed*, Turner hinted at a pessimistic attitude towards technology, one that blossomed in the 1880s among Symbolist artists and writers. In his 1898 play, *Les Aubes* (The Dawn), Belgian writer Émile Verhaeren lamented:

*The netted rails, upon the plains bestarred
With golden signals, swarm;
Trains graze the meadowlands, and pierce the banks;
The grass bleeds, and the virgin herb, harvest itself,
Feed on the sulphur's poisonous breath.
'Tis now*

*That, terrible in victory, come forth
Iron, and lead, and fire;
And hell itself comes forth with them!*

(Verhaeren 1898: Act, Scene 1)

Turner communicated chaos, violence, and unpredictability in nature consistent with his Romantic belief in the limited control humans exercised over it. To communicate his ideas, Turner devised a novel visual language involving the filter of memory and loose brushwork to evoke a particular emotional and visual experience.

CONSTABLE: CONSERVATIVE NOSTALGIA

A contrasting response to changes in the British countryside emerged in the paintings of John Constable (1776–1837) who, unlike Turner, had little curiosity about the world beyond the English Channel. Constable believed an artist only could paint honestly and convincingly the landscape which nurtured him. This conviction arose from geographical determinism, a theory positing that an individual's character and temperament were molded by the climate and geography of his childhood environment. Geographical determinism provided a convenient explanation for cultural differences and also for the importance of retaining the plot of land occupied by one's forbearers because, according to this theory, geographical relocation entailed loss of identity.

Constable's home turf was the countryside surrounding East Bergholt, in the province of Suffolk. His self-imposed boundaries for sketching consisted of the distance he could comfortably cover on foot in order to return home for meals. Constable claimed to accurately and lovingly portray the nature most familiar to him, and, on one level, he did. Upon closer scrutiny, however, it becomes clear that Constable was motivated by an aversion to the changes transforming the countryside; what appear as straightforward records of a peaceful nature were protests against the mechanization of agriculture and the disruption of traditional ways. Constable confessed his attachment to familiar surroundings as a response to a nostalgic yearning for childhood innocence in an 1821 letter to his friend Reverend John Fisher: "I should paint my own places best—painting is with me but another word for feeling. I associate 'my careless boyhood' to all that lies on the banks of the Stour" (Constable 1845: 118–19). Although he moved permanently to London in 1816, Constable relied on his notebooks filled with sketches from East Bergholt for the rest of his life.

Paradoxically, Constable came from a landowning family engaged in precisely the kind of modernization and business dealings that were destroying the landscape the artist so passionately wished to preserve. In fact, the farmers in Constable's home province of Suffolk were among the first to dramatically increase agricultural productivity through mechanization, crop rotation, and enclosure. Enclosure, implemented throughout Western Europe around 1800, ended the traditional open-field system (individuals working many small plots dispersed over a wide area) and community-owned pastures for livestock, in the name of rationalization and efficiency. Constable's father grew wheat and owned mills and granaries; high bread prices during the Napoleonic wars made him rich.

When his father died in 1816, Constable became financially independent, which was lucky because he sold fewer than two dozen paintings during his lifetime. Thanks to this financial security, Constable could paint what he liked. Still, Constable dreamed

Figure 5.9

John Constable, *The Hay Wain*, 1821. Oil on canvas, 130 × 185 cm (4 ft 3 in × 6 ft 1 in). The National Gallery, London.



of raising the status of landscape painting, which he planned to do by executing unusually large-scale scenes with no traditional historical narrative. Constable began producing his “six footers” (canvases that were six feet in width) at just the moment when appreciation of nature for its own sake was gaining acceptance. Constable’s six-footers won critical acclaim at both the RA and at the Salon, where *The Hay Wain* (Figure 5.9) was exhibited in 1824, winning a gold medal awarded by Charles X. Despite this official acceptance, Constable became a member of the RA only in 1829, after many bitter years of applying.

Although *The Hay Wain* seems to be a faithful representation of a particular location, it was produced according to traditional, academic procedures. Constable admired Poussin and Claude, as well as the seventeenth-century Dutch painter Jacob van Ruisdael (1628–82), many of whose landscapes were in British collections. Ruisdael provided a model for artists seeking alternatives to the classical landscape formula. His ordinary and natural-looking images of the Dutch countryside corresponded to Gilpin’s notion of the Picturesque. Constable made numerous on-the-spot sketches for *The Hay Wain* which he then used to compose a roughed-out oil sketch in the same scale as the final painting. In the final painting, Constable made compositional adjustments, as artists generally did, moving some things (clouds), adding or eliminating others (man on the shore). Part of the reason for this complicated method was habits developed by training, but also the traditional practice of executing oil paintings indoors, away from the motif. At the same time, there were practical considerations—oil paint is sticky and susceptible to smudging until it dries completely. In addition, because artists mixed their own oil paints from powdered pigments and linseed oil (ready-made oil paints in aluminum tubes were not manufactured until the 1840s) they required a protected space for their preparations.

In *The Hay Wain*, a hay-filled wagon (wain) crosses the Stour River near Flatford. Until the advent of railroads, canals were the primary means of industrial transport. This canal ran past the home of Willy Lot (on the left), a local peasant admired by Constable because he lived in the same house (which he rented) for

80 years, during which time he spent only four nights away. For the London public that was Constable's intended audience, *The Hay Wain* conveyed a reassuring image of the countryside, the locus of British identity. The Lott cottage appears as integral a landscape feature as the trees surrounding it. The wagon signals the productivity of cultivated nature and the diligence of the people working it. Constable included several peasants in the right background, who harvest hay in a manner that had been abandoned in Suffolk 20 years earlier. Constable portrayed these laboring farm hands at a safe enough distance that they could not threaten social stability. He presented a productive, harmonious countryside that could as well have depicted the seventeenth as the nineteenth century. This picture of rural laborers assumes an unmistakable political dimension in light of the violent unemployment riots of Suffolk farmhands in 1821–22, during which farm machinery was smashed (by the anti-industrial Luddites) and the military called in to restore order. In reality, the Suffolk countryside was nowhere as peaceful as Constable portrayed it.

Constable's presentation of a natural-looking, comforting, yet false picture of the British countryside had its counterpart in the writings of Jane Austen. Her novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) idealized the genteel, large-scale landowners, contrasting their wholesome lifestyle and values with the corruption of city dwellers. Such images suggested a contentedness, harmony, and cultural stability that contradicted the realities of drunkenness, exhaustion, illness, injury, starvation, and violence characterizing the daily lives of most rural inhabitants. By misrepresenting conditions in the countryside, Constable and Austen reified values essential to the preservation of British political, religious, and social institutions.

Constable made his first sketches of Salisbury Cathedral during an 1811 visit during which he became lifelong friends with John Fisher, son of the bishop. He painted the church several times, and his final effort, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* (Figure 5.10), shows the cathedral in good repair, growing out of the English countryside



Figure 5.10
John Constable, *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, 1831. Oil on canvas, 152 × 190 cm (5 ft × 6 ft 3 in). The National Gallery, London.

like a hearty plant and pointing heavenward toward the rainbow, as in Schinkel's *A Medieval City on a River* (Figure 4.20). In addition to carefully representing the nuances of nature, Constable encoded a political message: the Anglican Church provides the structure and stability essential for the spiritual and social well-being of Britons. The Anglican Church came under direct threat in 1828, the year before Constable began his painting, when the British parliament passed the Test and Corporation Act, legislating many new civil rights for non-Anglican Protestant men. As a result, they could now attend the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and hold public office. (This law preserved restrictions on the rights of Catholics—which included most of the Irish population—who won these rights in 1829, and Jews, who did not have full citizenship rights until 1871.) The original subtitle of *Salisbury Cathedral*, “*the church under a cloud*,” indicates Constable’s disapproval of what conservative Anglicans interpreted as an attack on the Church that weakened its influence in British society.

NATURALISM AND TOURISM

The career of French artist Camille Corot (1796–1875) exemplified the choices facing landscape painters in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. His career consisted of three distinct phases; early works conformed to the classical landscape formula, but once his career was established Corot began trying to accurately represent nuances of light and atmosphere at a particular place at a particular moment. In his later years, Corot painted twilight images conveying a melancholy mood and his emotional response to nature. The latter two types of landscape are labeled Naturalistic because of their unpretentious appearance. They *appeared* natural and unplanned, but were actually the result of a careful choice of viewpoint and even modifications of the real-life scene (additions, deletions, rearrangements). Naturalism became the dominant landscape type in Europe and America and was associated with a democratic (non-hierarchical) vision with one motif as worthy as another. Naturalism signaled a commitment to the truthful representation of nature.

Corot’s evolution as an artist resulted partly from his impulses and experiences, partly from changing attitudes toward landscape in society and in the Académie. His teachers at the École had been students of Valenciennes, from whom they learned both the principles of classical landscape painting and the practice of making outdoor sketches. For Corot and many of his generation, outdoor sketches became far more interesting challenges than the formulaic assembly of fragments to reconstruct a biblical or historical event.

The Colosseum Seen Through the Basilica of Constantine (Figure 5.11), was painted during Corot’s first trip to Italy (1825–28), as part of a “Times of Day” trilogy. It represents a different attitude toward representing Rome than Batoni’s portraits (Figure 1.11) or the souvenir paintings of Panini (Figure 1.10). Here, a seemingly random viewpoint and a sketchy rendition of the Colosseum include no human activity. However, despite its casual appearance, Corot’s *Colosseum* was just as carefully planned as Panini’s views. Corot used the arches of the Basilica of Constantine to structure the scene, dividing it into three clear sections like David’s *Oath of the Horatii* (Figure 2.8). Corot’s brushstrokes are visible and detail is reduced, which convey an impression of spontaneity. Revealing his working process in this way marked Corot’s conscious departure from academic standards and also related to ideas about truthfully revealing the artistic process. Technique as well as subject matter could have political



Figure 5.11
 Camille Corot, *The Colosseum
 Seen Through the Basilica of
 Constantine*, 1825. Oil on paper,
 23 × 35 cm (9 × 13¾ in).
 Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 5.12
 Camille Corot, *Chartres
 Cathedral*, 1830. Oil on canvas,
 64 × 52 cm (25¼ × 20¼ in).
 Musée du Louvre, Paris.

connotations. In France, many artists associated the brushless perfection of academic painting with the deceptive politics of the Bourbon regime, while the revelation of artistic process was linked to the perceived honesty of republican values.

When Corot returned to France from Italy, his morally and financially supportive family enabled him to paint as he wished. Thus liberated, Corot could paint scenes he found personally appealing on his extensive travels through the French countryside. In a diary entry, Corot explained: “Let your feelings be your only guide ... When faced with nature, begin by looking for form; then values and tonal relations, color and execution; and subordinate the whole to your original feelings. Our feelings are as real as anything else” (Harrison, *et al.* 1998: 535). Corot often chose to represent tourist sites from unconventional viewpoints, as was the case with *Chartres Cathedral* (Figure 5.12). Arguably France’s most beautiful and complete cathedral, Chartres (90 kilometers southwest of Paris) was built in the thirteenth century, and constituted a reassuring symbol of national greatness and stability in the revolutionary year of 1830, when Corot painted it. Rather than choosing a more typical, straight-on view of a symmetrical façade, Corot opted for an oblique viewpoint. The foreground construction site functioned, intentionally or not, as a metaphor of the French nation at a moment of transition. The new government of Louis-Philippe promised to build a stable and more democratic society based on Enlightenment principles as solid as the building blocks in Corot’s painting. Although Corot applied the classical landscape formula when it suited his subject, he often abandoned it for more casual views. Here, despite people in the foreground, there is no recognizable narrative, and movement into the distance occurs through layers—the pile of soil, the buildings, the cathedral. These layers correspond also to progressively more enduring entities—people, nature (represented by the young trees), and finally architecture/nation/religion. Thirty years before writer Charles Baudelaire encouraged artists to become “painters of contemporary life,” Corot had already begun. His interest in recording the light and shadow of a brilliant summer day provided inspiration in the 1860s to Impressionist painters. The moody scenes painted during Corot’s later years evidenced nostalgia for the countryside as a place of refuge—actual and imaginary. *Orpheus Leading Eurydice from the Underworld* (1861, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) is typical of Corot’s twilight scenes—set in a non-specific forest recorded through the mist of memory. The mythological narrative, painted earlier by Poussin and others, broadened its appeal.

When not traveling, Corot associated with a group of likeminded landscape painters known as the Barbizon School. United more by a common devotion to unpretentious, medium-sized views of French nature—inspired in part by their study of Constable’s *Hay Wain* at the 1824 Salon—than any similarity of style, a group of artists (including Théodore Rousseau, Charles Daubigny, and Jean-François Millet) resided in the Fontainebleau Forest outside the village of Barbizon, about 70 kilometers south of Paris. Working there beginning in the late 1820s, these artists sought both escape from the noise, filth, and expense of Paris and opportunities to paint straightforward records of French nature. Millet (Chapter 10) lived there year-round, but the others came only during the summer, spending winters painting in their Paris studios.

The Fontainebleau Forest was France’s first major tourist destination. Guidebooks described its features and recommended scenic paths and points of interest. Affluent Parisians made day trips to refresh themselves in the clean air

and pleasant scenery, and purchased paintings of favorite spots as imaginary escapes once back in the city. Despite the popular demand for such landscapes, official acceptance was slow in coming. Finally, in 1817, the École des Beaux-Arts established a professorship in landscape painting, and in 1821, a Prix de Rome in Historical Landscape. Although Corot exhibited landscapes at the Salons of 1831–35, his works were systematically rejected in the years 1836–41. His colleague Rousseau abstained from submitting to the Salon for political reasons until after the 1848 Revolution, when the repressive government of Louis-Philippe's July Monarchy was replaced. The Naturalism practiced by Barbizon artists—with its rejection of rigid compositional structures and dedication to faithfully capturing the appearance of an ordinary location—placed them in direct conflict with academic norms.

"You, dear poet, have spent your life looking at the great outdoors, at the fair weather and the rain, and at a thousand things imperceptible to the common eye. Nature for you has mystic beauties which escape us, and secret favors that you lovingly reproduce. When one has a feeling and a love for the spectacle of nature one is fortunate to be a painter like yourself. Otherwise the joys of contemplation are also a cause of tremendous suffering, as one is incapable of expressing one's enthusiasm. We, the profane, have but a sterile love, painful like some great romantic passion, impossible to satisfy, but the love you feel is of a different order. Painting, after all, is a true dialogue with the outside world, a productive, material communication. You truly master nature, and from this loving exchange a new being is born—the child of nature and art."

Source: Théophile Thoré, "The Salon of 1844 preceded by a letter to Théodore Rousseau," in *L'Artiste* (1844). Reprinted in Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger, eds, *Art in Theory, 1815–1900*. London: Blackwell Publishers, 1998, p. 221.

Théodore Rousseau (1812–67), like Constable, stayed in his native country, although he did travel extensively as part of his project to depict the most characteristic landscapes of France. This enterprise reflected concern for documenting the appearance of a world vanishing due to industrialization. Typical of these documentary landscapes is Rousseau's *Landscape with a Clump of Trees* (c. 1844, Figure 5.13), which



Figure 5.13

Théodore Rousseau, *Landscape with a Clump of Trees*, c.1844. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

portrays a peaceful rural scene in a horizontal format emphasizing the expanse of this flat pastureland. Devoid of drama—either narrative (like Constable) or atmospheric (like Turner)—Rousseau’s scene provided a reassuring vision of a nation apparently unchanged by revolution, industrial or political. This static vision of the countryside contrasted dramatically with the reality of life in Paris, where the population doubled to one million between 1800 and 1850.

FRIEDRICH: PATRIOTISM AND SPIRITUALITY

Landscape painting in the German states followed a different pattern than France or England, due primarily to three factors: (1) “Germany” consisted of many states with many art academies, (2) Napoleonic imperialism encouraged patriotism and nostalgia for an era when Germany was independent and powerful, and (3) pantheism permeated Lutheranism in the northern German states. A tendency to invest nature with spiritual significance as the only tangible manifestation of divinity emerged in the paintings of Runge (Chapter 4) and Friedrich.

Throughout his career, the German painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840) expressed a Romantic awareness of human limitations in his landscape paintings. Unlike Corot, whose paintings often evidence sensitivity to the art market and current trends in the art world, Friedrich was a determined individualist who considered painting a spiritual endeavor. Friedrich’s training was traditional: four years of drawing lessons at the local university (Greifswald), then four years at the Copenhagen Academy, where he studied with Jens Juel (Chapter 7). After completing his studies in 1798, Friedrich settled in Dresden, where he attracted the patronage of Friedrich August III, Elector of Saxony, for whom he made a series of topographical etchings. In 1805, Friedrich won a prize in Goethe’s Weimar Friends of Art competition with two landscape drawings, the first time a prize was awarded for a non-classical subject. Inspired by Friedrich Schelling’s nature philosophy and the medieval nostalgia of Ludwig Tieck, Friedrich’s artistic method combined memory and imagination, and his execution captured minute details observed in nature. Throughout his life, Friedrich hiked and sketched in Pomerania, Saxony, and Bohemia during the summers, gathering material for small landscape paintings sought after by collectors such as the King of Prussia and the Tsar of Russia. Like Blake, Goya, and others, Friedrich considered his generation plagued by false values: “What our ancestors believed and accomplished in childish simplicity, we too should believe and do with a higher more purified knowledge” (Harrison, *et al.* 1998: 49).

Friedrich was Lutheran, like most inhabitants of the northern German states and Scandinavia. Lutherans, unlike Catholics, believe that individuals can communicate directly with God (independent of an ordained priest, the conduit to God for Anglicans, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians). In the north, many Lutherans believed that the best way to know God was through his perfect creation, nature. Lutherans rejected the Neoclassical assertion that nature was imperfect and the belief of some Romantics that nature was chaotic. Instead, they believed that nature was structured by a divine order graspable through a combination of faith and contemplation. Friedrich’s ideas about the spirituality of nature were passionate because he was influenced by the ideas of Novalis, who believed that individual souls strive for harmony with the world soul. Friedrich did exhibit Romantic individualism. He declared:

The artist should not only paint what he sees before him, but also what he sees within him. If, however, he sees nothing within him, then he should also omit to paint that which he sees before him. Otherwise his picture will resemble those folding screens behind which one expects to find only the sick or even the dead.

(Friedrich 1972: 103)

Friedrich expressed his ideas about nature and spirituality in an altarpiece, *Cross in the Mountains* (1807–08, Figure 5.14). This is the first altarpiece consisting solely of a landscape. Here, Friedrich demonstrated his innovative spirit by transgressing the boundary between Catholic (or at least Pre-Reformation) devotional forms and Lutheran ones. Despite its novel use of nature as Christian symbolism, *Cross in the Mountains* conformed to the Lutheran rejection of Catholic religious imagery. Martin Luther (1483–1536) claimed images of saints found in Catholic churches detracted from authentic spiritual contemplation because they focused attention on humans rather than on divinity. As a consequence, Lutherans abandoned the use of altarpieces (and pictorial wall decoration). In his path-breaking altarpiece, Friedrich replaced typical New Testament depictions with a common sight in the mountains of central Europe—a crucifix (with or without the effigy of Christ) planted at the summit of a high mountain. Such crucifixes verify the ascent of individuals to a spot offering an awe-inspiring landscape view (marking, in effect, a tourist destination). Because



Figure 5.14

Caspar David Friedrich, *Cross in the Mountains* (*The Tetschen Altar*), 1808. Oil on canvas
115 × 111 cm (45¼ × 43 in).
Galerie Neue Meister, Dresden.

these crucifixes were placed in the closest earthly proximity to heaven, here, people believed, one came nearest—physically and spiritually—to the Creator.

Here, Friedrich also initiated a practice that became common at the end of the nineteenth century among Symbolist artists: he designed his own wooden frame to enhance the meaning of his painting. He reinforced the sacred character of *Cross in the Mountains* by including religious symbols on the frame: grapes and wheat, referring to the blood and body of Jesus, a triangle containing the omniscient eye of God and referring to the trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Its form—a pointed Gothic arch—evoked Gothic churches and monasteries. Friedrich's colleague Runge adopted a similar strategy in *Morning* (Figure 4.6), with his painted frame enlarging ideas contained in the scene. Friedrich planned the altar as a gift to King Gustaf Adolf of Sweden, ruler of Pomerania, the German-speaking Baltic province where Friedrich was born. However, when Gustav Adolf surrendered the Pomeranian island of Rügen to Napoleon, Friedrich changed his mind, eventually selling it to Austrian Count von Thun-Hohenstein, an anti-Napoleon activist from Tetschen, Bohemia (now Děčín, Czech Republic).

In one of his few published statements, Friedrich explained *Cross in the Mountain's* symbolism: "The cross stands planted on a rock, unshakably firm like our faith in Jesus Christ. The fir trees surround the cross, ever green and enduring through all time, like the hopes of man in Him, the crucified" (Börsch-Supan 1974: 78). While Friedrich's spirituality infused all his paintings, he was also upset by the Napoleonic wars. Many of his paintings from this period (1806–14) contain either overt or hidden references to Friedrich's overwhelming sadness about conditions in the German-speaking world. Like many of his contemporaries, Friedrich embraced the ideas of Ludwig Tieck and Goethe, who suggested that a lack of spirituality and political unity facilitated Napoleon's easy conquest of German lands.

Friedrich's most famous painting, *Traveler in a Sea of Fog* (1818, Figure 5.15), seems to echo the words of Wackenroder:

We sons of this century are privileged to stand on the summit of a high mountain from which we survey many countries and periods spread out at our feet. Let us make use of our good fortune, let our gaze sweep serenely over these period and peoples, and let us try to recognize in their ways of feeling and working the essential, human element.

(Wackenroder 1797: 46)

Friedrich painted *Traveler in a Sea of Fog* after the Congress of Vienna (1815), which restored peace to Europe after the Napoleonic wars. According to tradition, *Traveler* depicts a Prussian war hero—Friedrich von Brincken (1789–1846)—surveying his native landscape of Saxon Switzerland southeast of Dresden. This historical context suggests a patriotic interpretation. Without it, an equally valid and more universal message emerges about individuals identifying with nature and reflecting on spirituality and human purpose. Friedrich devised this composition to foster viewer identification with the back-facing figure, thereby drawing viewers into his picture, conceptually and spiritually.



Figure 5.15
Caspar David Friedrich,
Traveler in a Sea of Fog, 1818.
Oil on canvas, 95 × 75 cm
(37½ × 29½ in). Kunsthalle,
Hamburg.

FEMINIZATION OF NATURE

Karl Blechen (1798–1840) represented a younger generation of landscape painters, one more in tune with international trends and marked by a fascination with appearances more than spirituality. He abandoned a career in banking to study art at Berlin's Art Academy (1822–24), after which Friedrich Schinkel secured him a job designing scenery for the Königstadt Theater (1824–27), a job he quit in order to travel to Italy (1828–29). Blechen was appointed Professor of Landscape at the Berlin Academy in 1831, a post he was forced to resign at the onset of mental illness in 1836. Like Turner, Constable, Corot, and Rousseau, Blechen's fascination with the transitory effects of light and atmosphere anticipated by three decades a central concern of the Impressionists. In *Sanssouci Palace* (1843–45, Figure 5.16), built in Potsdam in the 1740s by Prussia's Enlightenment monarch Friedrich the Great, Blechen tried to capture with visual precision the light refracted by water spurting from its fountains. Blechen's desire to convey with visual precision the atmospheric effects of a moment in time contrasted with Turner's search for pictorial equivalents for remembered experience in nature and anticipated concerns of Impressionist painters. Located 40 kilometers west of Berlin, Sanssouci's lavish system of gardens was a tourist attraction that became accessible from Berlin by train in 1838. Blechen subordinated the building's historical significance as a Rococo summer palace to an interest in capturing in paint the complexity of optical phenomena.

Figure 5.16

Karl Blechen, *Sanssouci Palace*, 1843–45. Oil on cardboard, 41 × 33 cm (16 × 13 in). Nationalgalerie, Berlin.



Blechen's most famous work, *Bathers in the Park at Terni* (1833, Figure 5.17), was so popular that the artist painted at least nine versions of it. Terni is a small town in the Italian province of Umbria, whose nature Blechen recorded with great accuracy. Inaccurate, however, were the bathers, who turn toward the viewer in evident surprise. And they should, since outdoor bathing would have been an unusual practice for women in the mid-nineteenth century. Not only were women considered physically and emotionally vulnerable to fluctuations of any kind, but water was associated more with disease than hygiene during that era of rampant cholera epidemics. The phenomenon of women bathing outdoors was purely a figment of the voyeuristic male imagination.

The titillating character of this image becomes clear in the context of contemporary gender relations. In 1851, the German philosopher Arnold Schopenhauer published his influential essay “On Women,” which codified misogynistic ideas circulating at the time, ideas that formed the basis of the institutionalized suppression of women throughout the nineteenth century. This belief, supported by an increasing body of “scientific” evidence based on behavioral studies and measurements of female organs, kept women out of politics, business, courtrooms, and higher education. Schopenhauer expressed the dominant male view that a woman's intellectual development was limited to that of a child, making her moral judgment unreliable and obstructing abstract thought and logical reasoning. This childlike state made women selfish, intellectually shallow, materialistic, and emotional. Intense experiences—physical, intellectual, or emotional—could trigger instability,



Figure 5.17
Karl Blechen, *Bathers in the Park at Terni*, 1833. Oil on canvas, 100 × 77 cm (39¼ × 30¾ in). Landesmuseum Hannover.

even insanity, so it was the responsibility of men to insure a tranquil environment for their women. Dutiful men spared their wives intense experiences, pleasurable or otherwise, to safeguard their mental and physical well-being, a situation contributing to the rise of prostitution. Proper women appearing in public were clothed from neck to toe, not for their own sake, but to discourage the arousal of male appetites. Nowhere in the Western world were women guaranteed legal rights equal to those of men, and even the abolition of slavery and serfdom meant the acquisition of rights for men only. Women were the legal property of their male guardians—father, brother, or husband—and usually required permission to obtain medical attention, open bank accounts, appear in public, work, send and receive mail, or receive visitors. Thus, this image of two nude females clandestinely bathing in a forest and caught in the act by the (presumably male) viewer, presented an enticing if implausible image. Despite its erotic subject, the small scale of *Bathers* made it private and intimate, and therefore not in violation of academic norms.

HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL

In the new American nation, there was no tradition of art patronage—those Europeans who immigrated to the North American colonies were primarily businessmen, farmers, religious exiles, or criminals. The art-collecting social strata of Europe stayed there. As a result, the American art market was initially non-existent. Prior to the American

Revolution, colonists made steady demands for portraiture because the impulse to record oneself and loved ones for posterity is universal. After the Revolution, state and national governments harnessed art for propaganda purposes –to establish the legitimacy of the United States by linking its important events and persons to historical precedents, as in Trumbull's portrait of *Washington at the Battle of Trenton* (Figure 3.2). After a few decades, however, an affluent class evolved that sought validation by emulating European ruling class behavior. The American bourgeoisie began collecting art and embellishing their homes with decorative objects. When they began commissioning paintings; landscape subjects were the most popular.

Landscape had special status in America, whose virgin forests made it seem an unspoiled paradise compared with Western Europe, largely deforested in the Middle Ages. In America, there was plenty of land (as long as one ignored First Nation claims), with no ancestral connection of European settlers to it. This situation generated two conflicting attitudes toward nature, both with theological justifications. The pantheistic outlook posited that the untamed American wilderness existed in a state of Edenic purity untransformed by human hands since the first day of creation. Here, in the silence of the forest or from the height of a mountain, one could recapture a sense of biomystical connectedness to the Divine. Artist Thomas Cole (1801–48) expressed this attitude when he wrote:

The most distinctive, and perhaps the most impressive, characteristic of American scenery is its wildness ... those scenes of solitude from which the hand of nature has never been lifted, affect the mind with a more deep toned emotion than anything which the hand of man has touched. Amid them the consequent associations are of God the creator—they are his undefiled works and the mind is cast into contemplation of eternal things.

(Cole 1980: 7–8)

The other (dualistic) attitude considered nature as a creation for human use, its divine purpose fulfilled when subjected to a Christian sense of order and made productive for society. This was articulated by the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, a term coined in 1845 by John Sullivan:

the right of our manifest destiny [allows Americans] to spread over and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federal development of self-government entrusted to us. It is right such as that of the tree to the space of air and the earth suitable for the full expansion of its principle and destiny of growth.

(Merk 1963: 32)

Manifest Destiny (Figure 5.18) expressed typical imperialist thinking, but imperialism developed a special meaning in the American context: only European-Americans should decide the fate of their continent. President James Monroe expressed this idea in a 2 December 1823 address to Congress: “Our policy in regard to Europe ... is not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers ... in hope that other powers will pursue the same course . . .” Here, both religion and a secular belief in destiny provided justification for a political agenda.



Figure 5.18
George Croft, *American Progress*, 1873.

Thomas Cole (1801–48), born in England, accompanied his family to the US in 1818. He began as a self-taught, itinerant portrait painter until he visited Europe in 1829. There, inspired by the landscapes of Constable and Turner, Valenciennes, and Corot, he switched to landscape painting. While working for a steady and enthusiastic clientele, Cole never had the freedom of either Turner or Friedrich, who had bands of loyal, well-paying patrons, or Constable, who was financially independent. Cole resented his situation, complaining late in life: “I am not the artist I should have been had taste been higher. For instead of indulging myself in the production of works such as my feelings would have chosen ... in order to exist, I have painted to please others” (Noble 1964: 220). Although largely liberated from a lifelong production of propaganda and decorative art for rulers, most artists had to be responsive to the taste of the art-buying public for economic survival.

For instance, in 1833, the New York businessman Luman Reed commissioned Cole to paint a series of five scenes, *Course of Empire* (Figure 5.19). These traced the cyclical progress of civilization as described in Edward Gibbons’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–83). *The Savage State* represented a world whose human presence was subordinated to nature; *The Pastoral or Arcadian State* depicted a world where humans coexist in symbiotic harmony with nature, using resources in a renewable and responsible way; *The Consummation of Empire* represented a world where materialism and the selfish exercise of power dominate sound judgment; *Destruction* shows the consequence of such abuse; and finally *Desolation* depicts a post-apocalyptic world where omnipotent natural forces demonstrate their resilience. This morally instructive project conformed to academic norms, and the paintings’ compositions followed the classical landscape painting formula. Each scene was set at a different time of day in order to clarify its place in the cycle of history. The *Course of Empire* depicted ideas common in contemporary philosophy. According to Joseph-Arthur Count of Gobineau in his four-volume *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853–55):

Figure 5.19

Thomas Cole, *Course of Empire: Arcadian State* (2nd in series), 1833–36. Oil on canvas, 100 × 160 cm (3 ft 3¼ in × 5 ft 3¼ in). The New-York Historical Society.



The fall of civilizations is the most striking and obscure of all historical phenomena ... [A]fter a period of strength and glory one notices that all human societies have their decline and fall ... It is we modern men who know best of all how every society of men and every mode of intellectual culture resulting from it must perish. Earlier eras did not believe this.

(Thomas 1941: 29–32)

Cole's contemporaries understood the warning about human vanity contained in the *Course of Empire*, but also interpreted it from a political viewpoint. The fact that none of the scenes correspond to an identifiable locale enabled the *Course of Empire* to function as a flexible metaphor for two opposing positions. The Whigs (formerly the Federalists), fearing the precedent of Andrew Jackson's "strong" presidency with frequent use of veto power (a presidential power he established) and pursuit of personal crusades because of their potential for self-serving corruption, interpreted the *Course of Empire* as a warning about the dangers of America's current political condition. The Jacksonian Democrats, on the other hand, felt it exemplified the threat of despotism (such as one had in the absolutist monarchies of Europe) for (American) democracy, whose egalitarian ethos would never permit, they thought, an evolution from *Arcadia* to *Consummation*.

Cole lived and worked in New York City, whose bourgeoisie enjoyed rural imagery for the same reasons as urbanites elsewhere: its fresh air and twittering birds contrasted with their daily exposure to smoggy air and noisy streets. When the Catskill Mountain House, a favorite retreat for affluent New Yorkers, opened along the Hudson River in 1824, Cole joined the weekend exodus of pleasure seekers and painted souvenir views for them. The development of the Catskill Mountains as a tourist destination occurred at the same time and in much the same way as the Fontainebleau Forest did for nature-starved Parisians. The pleasant working conditions and lucrative prospects offered of painting touristic landscapes in the Catskills attracted a group of younger artists known as the Hudson River School.

AMERICAN WEST

Further west, George Caleb Bingham (1811–79) spent his career recording life along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, as did Mark Twain two decades later. In *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* (1845, Figure 5.20), Bingham portrayed a rugged individualism considered typically American. Fur trapping was an occupation dominated by men of French ancestry, who spent their lives alone in the forests setting and checking traps, trading with Native Americans, cleaning pelts and selling them to traders. Traders then marketed furs to middlemen like John Jacob Astor’s American Fur Company in St Louis. The title under which the painting was first exhibited at the American Art-Union confirms the ethnic identity of the subjects—*French Trader and His Half-Breed Son*. French traders often had First Nation women as their companions or wives. Not only did these women facilitate business dealings with local nations, but they were resourceful partners in a wilderness most European-American women found hostile.

Here, father and son float down the Missouri River, the border with “Indian Territory” at the time. In a frozen moment on an early summer morning, a father and son pause in their paddling to engage the eye of the artist-viewer, gazing from their exotic wilderness world into ours. The tumult associated with Indian removal and the desperate conditions for trappers following the fur market crash of 1837 is nowhere evident. Although all seems calm, the rifle on which the youth leans hints at the uncertainties of frontier existence, and the chained pet (identified as either a cat or a bear cub—the state symbol), testifies to the need for human control of nature. The civilizing influence of Euro-American life—considered beneficial and part of a divine plan—is evidenced by the boy’s adoption of western dress. Bingham painted an idealized image of a wild yet apparently well-controlled world that reassured his urban audience that all was quiet on the western front.



Figure 5.20
George Caleb Bingham,
*Fur Traders Descending the
Missouri*, 1845. Oil on canvas,
73 × 93 cm (29 × 36½ in).
The Metropolitan Museum of
Art, New York.

Figure 5.21

Albert Bierstadt, *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak*, 1863. Oil on canvas, 187 × 307 cm (6 ft 1½ in × 10 ft). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Manifest Destiny was an underlying theme in many large-scale landscape paintings of second-generation Hudson River School artists, including those of Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902). Bierstadt's *The Rocky Mountains: Lander's Peak* (1863, Figure 5.21) captured the vast scale and ruggedness of the western wilderness in an appropriately large painting—about six feet high and ten feet wide (c. 200 × 300 cm). Born in Germany but raised in Massachusetts, Bierstadt returned in 1853 to study at the renowned Düsseldorf Academy, where his uncle taught. He returned to the US in 1857, and two years later joined Frederick Lander's 1859 Honey Road Survey to Wyoming. Bierstadt made drawings and photographs along the way that provided the basis for his painting. Following Lander's death in the Civil War, Bierstadt named the impressive peak in the surveyor's honor.

The dramatic scale and subject of *The Rocky Mountains: Lander's Peak* inspired a range of responses, from national pride to sublime feelings of awe and fear. The Rockies attested to the greatness of divine creation, but also constituted a dangerous obstacle to westward travel. A peaceful First Nation encampment in the foreground exemplifies American wilderness in its unspoiled, Edenic purity prior to the arrival of European-Americans. Crowds came to see *Lander's Peak* when it was exhibited in 1864 at private galleries in New York and Chicago, and at the Paris Exposition universelle of 1867 where it won a prize. In 1865 *Lander's Peak* was purchased for \$25,000, a hefty price at the time for a contemporary painting.

CONCLUSION

Landscape painting, more than any other category, experienced a clear and rapid evolution from compositions and subjects dictated by academic tradition to ones determined either by individual preference or market demands. The classical landscape formula embodied a hierarchical world view consistent with the absolutist era of monarchs, and as this era waned, so did the classical landscape formula. The Sublime and the Picturesque offered alternatives considered more responsive to contemporary attitudes. The Sublime expressed both fear and exhilaration in the face of instability and transformation. The Picturesque emerged from an Enlightenment interest in

studying the appearance of nature, and affirmed the beauty of ordinary nature. The Sublime and Picturesque provided a transition to both Romanticism, which projected emotional and/or spiritual content into nature, and to Naturalism, which focused on the truthful representation of typical moments in nature. The implications of the idea of nature as symbol culminated in Symbolism, whereas the commitment to truthfully representing perceptions of nature inspired Realists and Impressionists. These categories were, however, sufficiently flexible to permit a variety of interpretations.

For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.



Colonialism, Imperialism, Orientalism

Exploration was initially motivated by economic and political factors—a desire for markets, resources, and territorial dominance. It eventually assumed a different, more psychological character: an altruistic urge to “civilize” barbarous peoples and curiosity about faraway lands. For those limited to armchair travel via books and prints, fantasy and imagination brought strange locations and their inhabitants alive. In the process imaginary travelers often projected inaccurate values, attitudes, and customs. These projections fulfilled Western needs, and became more extreme the more rapidly the Western world changed. Western artists portrayed their nations’ involvement in non-Western cultures in a variety of ways and indigenous peoples assumed varied significance in the context of Western social history.

Beginning with the Age of Exploration in the sixteenth century, British, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Italian governments funded expeditions searching for a shortcut to the Far East—the Northwest Passage. While few were successful, important discoveries were made along the way—Henry Hudson discovered the mouth of the Hudson River (c. 1610), Humphrey Gilbert established in Newfoundland the first North American British colony (1580s), and Samuel de Champlain established the first French colony at Quebec (c. 1600). During the same period, Vasco da Gama mapped the West Coast of Africa and was the first European to arrive in India by sea (1490s), Christopher Columbus explored the Bahaman Islands (1490s), Ferdinand Magellan was the first to circumnavigate the globe sailing west (c. 1520), and Hernando Cortes conquered south and central Mexico (c. 1520), establishing Spanish claims in America.

In 1600, the British government granted a consortium of merchants, the East India Company, exclusive rights to trade in the East Indies (East Asia). The East India Company established a lucrative trade in Hong Kong, Singapore, and India, but had difficulty maintaining the social and political stability in India essential to business. For instance, East India Company policies contributed to a famine killing 15 percent of Bengal’s population in the 1770s, after which the British government took control (1773), effectively turning the subcontinent into a colony. Cotton, gunpowder, silk, and tea were the mainstays of the Company’s trade. Appreciating the profitability of such an organization, the Dutch established their own East India Company in 1602, granting exclusive trading rights in Asia and a headquarters in Indonesia. Specializing



Figure 6.1
William Hodges, *View of Oaitepeha Bay, Tahiti, 1776*. Oil on canvas, 90 × 136 cm (35½ × 53½ in). National Maritime Museum, London.

in the import of spices, the Dutch East India Company established posts on the southern tip of Africa and in Persia (Iran). Two decades later, the Dutch West India Company was formed and enjoyed exclusive trading rights in the Americas, the Pacific, and West Africa, concentrating on the import of luxury goods such as fur, gold, ivory, slaves, and sugar.

DOCUMENTING DISTANT LANDS AND PEOPLES

Having established the colonies necessary to sustain economic growth and the military strength required to assure local compliance, Britain turned its attention to the search for a hypothetical “Southern Continent” in the Pacific Ocean. In 1766, George III commissioned Captain James Cook to undertake this expedition, during which he discovered Hawaii, Tahiti, and New Zealand. Pleased with Cook’s accomplishments on his return in 1771 but still hoping to discover the “Southern Continent,” in 1772 George III sent Cook on his second voyage aboard the *Resolution*. This time, Cook took with him a naturalist, a botanist, and artist William Hodges (1744–97), to document new discoveries. Etchings made after Hodges’s drawings and paintings illustrated Cook’s published journal of the voyage, *A Voyage Toward the South Pole* (1777). Among these was *View of Oaitepeha Bay, Tahiti* (Figure 6.1). A kind of exotic precedent for Blechen’s Terni bathers (Figure 5.17), two naked native women cool off on a warm day in a lush and rugged landscape. Although Hodges composed the image in compliance with the classical landscape formula, the tropical landscape and totem figure on the right establish the location as exotic. Hodges depicted places where Europeans had never before set foot; he provided a privileged view into a distant land that evoked an imagined, pre-lapsarian nature untainted by sin or civilization.

Among the exotic specimens Cook brought back to London in 1775 was Omai, a Tahitian prince. Omai was presented to George III and Queen Charlotte who, along with the rest of London society, were charmed by this dignified, polite, and friendly “noble savage.” (Omai made a particularly favorable impression due to low expectations resulting from the “barbarous” behavior of visiting North American

Eskimos in 1772; they died of smallpox before they could return home.) Society portraitist and president of the Royal Academy (RA), Joshua Reynolds exhibited his portrait of Omai at the RA exhibition of 1776 (Figure 6.2), and it was engraved shortly thereafter. Posed like the *Apollo Belvedere*, Omai possessed the poised self-assurance of a Greek god, an impression enhanced by his classicizing robe. Despite exotic features such as dark skin, tattoos, pointed fingernails, and an imaginary Tahitian setting, Omai seems reassuringly familiar because of his conformity to Western standards of princely bearing. Omai made a profound and lasting impression on the British public—in 1785 artist and entrepreneur Philippe de Loutherbourg wrote and staged a critically acclaimed pantomime production, *Omai, or a Trip Round the World*, at Covent Garden's Theatre Royal. In a private collection since the eighteenth century, *Omai* was auctioned at Sotheby's in 2001 for the second highest price ever paid for a British painting.

Despite Omai's popularity, Britons had conflicting attitudes about Tahitian culture. On the one hand, the portrait represented an unspoiled and innocent society evocative of the Garden of Eden whose simplicity and harmonious interdependence with nature could furnish a model for the reform of corrupt European ways. On the other, it seemed savage and inferior, in desperate need of the civilizing effects of European commerce, customs, and Christianity. These views reflected the conflicting attitudes toward nature examined in Chapter Five: nature as a flawless manifestation of divine creation that should be preserved or as a resource for human exploitation. To Westerners, native peoples occupied a lower position on the developmental (if not evolutionary) scale. They were considered either part of nature, or as younger siblings in need of guidance.

The British Empire was vast, wealthy, and powerful. By the eighteenth century, it had a secure foothold in Asia and by the mid-nineteenth century, it had an extensive military, bureaucratic, and business presence in India and North Africa. Like Grand Tourists who purchased souvenir paintings to commemorate their travels, colonists bought paintings showing the exotic conditions of their adopted homes. However, working in the colonies was not the first choice of artists because the market was so small. Still, those unable to make a respectable living at home or whose popularity was eclipsed by a younger generation were sometimes willing to take their chances.

This was the case with Johan Zoffany (1733–1810), a German expatriate working in London. His portraits were in demand in the 1760s, but by the time he returned from a successful, seven-year stay in Italy in 1779, Zoffany's figure-packed group portraits had fallen from favor, and in 1783 he left for India. There, he commuted between English settlements in Calcutta and Lucknow, amassing a fortune in commissions from colonial administrators and wealthy natives. *Colonel Mordaunt's Cock Match* (1784–86, Figure 6.3), commissioned by Warren Hastings, Governor-General of India from 1773 to 1785, depicts an ancient and popular blood (and betting) sport, in which two roosters fight, usually to the death. In a crowded scene of more than 70 (suggesting the artist may have been paid by the figure), Zoffany provides a glimpse into colonial leisure life. In this colorful and richly detailed image, the artist distinguishes between Europeans and Indians, with their facial hair, turbans, flowing robes, bare feet, and distinctive squatting. Rulers and ruled mingle amicably: two Britons—Colonel Mordaunt and a heavy-set fellow in the right foreground—wear Indian slippers, affirming that influence went both ways. Hastings believed the British should respect the Indian way of life by learning their languages and



Figure 6.2

Joshua Reynolds, *Omai*, 1776.

Oil on canvas, 236 x 145 cm (7 ft 9 in x 4 ft 9 in).

Private Collection.

Figure 6.3

Johan Zoffany, *Colonel Mordaunt's Cock Match*, c. 1784–86. Oil on canvas, 104 × 150 cm (3 ft 5 in × 4 ft 10 in). Tate, London.



understanding their culture, history, and religion. Hastings hired native tutors for colonial administrators and established the College of Fort William, whose Indian studies curriculum was tailored to British students. He brought the first printing presses to India, which published India's classic literature in English, Sanskrit (the ancient Indian language), and Persian (the official language of the Mogul court). In the 1830s, Hastings' "Orientalist" policy was abandoned and the British launched an unsuccessful effort to westernize India by opening English language schools for Indians and attempting to Christianize the population. Although Zoffany's cheerful scene painted the picture Hastings wanted to realize in India, it ignored the inequities and tensions of colonial life. This included the armed resistance occurring in various parts of the country (British troops were defeated in the Battle of Wandsiwash by Tippu Sultan, ruler of Mysore in 1783). *Colonel Mordaunt's Cock Match* offered a falsely idealized image of colonial occupation that portrayed it as mutually beneficial.

COLONIAL CITIZENS

A short-lived attempt to insure the equality of all peoples occurred in the wake of the French Revolution, when all men in France and its colonial possessions were declared citizens. Some, including Jean-Baptiste Belley (1797, Figure 6.4), earned emancipation in other ways. A Senegalese slave, Belley became free when he joined the French army as a youth; he had a successful 25-year military career. Belley was elected representative of the French colony of Saint-Domingue (Haiti) to the Convention government in Paris in 1794, the year all French slaves were emancipated, and his term ended shortly before Girodet painted his portrait. In 1802, Napoleon reinstated slavery and expelled blacks from the army. Belley was imprisoned and died in 1805. For the dark-skinned inhabitants of France and its colonies, life under Napoleon was worse than it had been under the Bourbon regime.

Belley leans against a portrait bust of philosopher Abbé Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, an abolitionist who died in 1796. Raynal's *A Philosophical and Political History of*



Figure 6.4

Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy Trioson, *Monsieur Belley*, 1797. Oil on canvas, 158 × 111 cm (5 ft 2¼ in × 3 ft 7¾ in). Chateaux de Versailles.

the Settlements and Commerce of the Europeans in the East and West Indies (1770) exposed the injustices of colonialism, and led to his exile by Louis XV and a publication ban on his writings. Nonetheless, the book became a bestseller, was translated into English, and went through 70 editions by the time of the author's death. Dressed in his military uniform and wearing the sash of a representative in the republican colors of red, white, and blue (alluding to an egalitarian, multi-ethnic nation), Belley appears calm, rational, thoughtful, and fully capable of governing the fledgling French republic. Like Reynolds with Omai, Girodet adapted Belley to western portraiture conventions: dressed in European gentleman's finery, Belley leans against a sculpture and gazes into the landscape with the self-assurance of a Pompeo Batoni Grand Tourist. Girodet considered *Belley* a history painting because of its size and style. But there was another set of conventions that applied to Belley: that of picturing black men, usually depicted either as plantation slaves or liveried servants.

Belley himself did not fit traditional categories, making Girodet's portrait a path-breaking hybrid, a distinction the artist emphasized by contrasting "civilized" aspects with exotic attributes: Belley's dark complexion, gold earring, and large sex organ, which the artist calls attention to by the contrast between Belley's dark skin and pale breeches. Clearly rendering Belley's physical endowment violated portraiture conventions. Was Girodet suggesting the dominance in black men of their physical (animal, irrational) over their intellectual nature? After all, Raynal the (white) philosopher is represented only by his head. Did it signal a dangerous virility that



To read recent scholarly interpretations of race in *Belley* go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

"Behold that owner of a vessel who, leaning on his desk and with pen in hand, decides on the number of atrocities he will allow on the Coast of Guinea. He leisurely considers how many guns he needs to get one Negro, what chains will be required to keep him imprisoned aboard his ship, what whips will be necessary to make him work. He calmly calculates every drop of blood the slave must give while working for him and how much it will produce. He considers whether a Negro woman will be more advantageous to him by working or by going through the dangers of childbirth. You shudder!—If there existed any religion that tolerated or which gave even silent approval to such horrors ... shouldn't its minister be suffocated under the rubble of his own altar?"

Source: Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, *Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Deux Indes des établissements et du commerce des Européens*, vol. 5. Neuchâtel-Geneva: Libraires Associés, 1783, p. 277.

endangered the virtue of European women and racial purity, or European mistrust of other races? Or, perhaps the success of enlightened colonialism in subduing the animal nature of inferior non-Europeans? Considered together with *Endymion* (Figure 2.13), the possibility of intentional homoeroticism emerges, and the pioneering way Girodet presented homosexual desire in a guise acceptable to his contemporaries. A painting whose interpretation is still contested by scholars, *Belley* exemplifies the transgression of tradition and the interpretive ambiguity associated with modernity.

PICTURING SLAVERY

Slavery provided the labor enabling Europeans to reap profits from colonies through the collecting of raw materials subsequently processed in Europe. In North America, cotton and tobacco were the main crops. Britain's import of raw cotton rose from 11 million pounds in 1785 to 588 million pounds in 1850, mainly from the US, but also from Egypt. Turner's *The Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying—Typhoon Coming On)* (1840, Figure 6.5), represented a scandalous chapter in Britain's colonial history that exemplified the kind of abuse against which French abolitionist Abbé Raynal fought. Turner depicted a 1781 incident in which slave traders sailing on the ship *Zong* threw overboard more than 50 sick and dead slaves they had seized in Africa and were transporting to Liverpool; the ship owners could only collect insurance on "cargo lost at sea." Thomas Clarkson described the scandal in *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (1808), and Turner—who had friends in the Anti-Slavery Society—may have read it when it was republished in 1839. The subject was topical because Britain passed a law in 1833 that abolished slavery in its colonies by 1840, a task completed by 1838. Thus, visitors to the 1840 Royal Academy exhibition could view *The Slave Ship* with a sense of self-satisfaction rather than guilt. Against a symbolically blood-red sky, the *Zong* tosses in the waves, while in the foreground ironbound Africans flail hysterically as hungry sharks close in. Art critic John Ruskin (1819–1900) purchased *The Slave Ship*, but described the dramatic visual effects enthusiastically without once mentioning the gruesome subject. Instead, he praised Turner's technique, vortex composition, and paint dappled onto the canvas without outlines, an effective means, Ruskin thought, of communicating the power of nature (Turner 1974: 145).

In the US, slavery was a fact of life in the South and increasingly in the limelight as war approached in 1861. Still, it was a rare subject for artists who concentrated



To find out what
Ruskin wrote
about *Slave Ship*
go to [www.routledge.com/
textbooks/facos](http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos)



Figure 6.5

Joseph M.W. Turner, *The Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying — Typhoon Coming On)*, 1840. Oil on canvas, 91 x 123 cm (3 x 4 ft). Photo © 2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 99.22.



Figure 6.6

Eastman Johnson, *Old Kentucky Home: Life in the South (Negro Life at the South)*, 1859. Oil on canvas, 92 x 115 cm (36 x 45¼ in). The New-York Historical Society.

on more marketable themes. Genre painter Eastman Johnson (1824–1906) exercised exceptional tact in *Old Kentucky Home: Life in the South* (1859, Figure 6.6) since anti- and pro-slavery factions could both interpret it in a positive light. Johnson studied at the Düsseldorf Academy in the early 1850s when Nazarene Wilhelm Schadow was director and it had an international reputation for producing genre painters. Afterwards, he worked briefly in Paris with renowned academic painter Thomas Couture (Chapter 11). Painted in 1859, two years after the Dred Scott Supreme Court

Figure 6.7

Robert S. Duncanson, *Uncle Tom and Little Eva*, 1853.
Oil on canvas, 69 × 97 cm
(27¼ × 38¾ in). Detroit
Institute of Arts.



decision asserting that descendents of slaves—particularly those escaping to the North—had no civil rights and should be returned to their owners, *Old Kentucky Home* betrayed none of the racial tension prevalent at the time in this southern border state. The ramshackle house and messy yard demarcate a socially unacceptable space clearly distinguished from the tidy, well-kept “white” home next door. But the inhabitants seem oblivious to their squalor—they dance, play music, and converse in a relaxed and cheerful manner that ignores the hardship and indignity that characterized their lives. Johnson depicts a range of activities, ages, and complexions: a dark-skinned woman dances with a small boy, a light-skinned teenager flirts. Lighter-skinned slaves were likely products of interracial relationships, thus directing attention to the inclination of slave owners to use female slaves as mistresses. For abolitionists, Johnson’s painting exposed the miserable living conditions of slaves, including sexual abuse, whereas for slavery supporters it epitomized the peaceful coexistence between whites (represented by the elegantly dressed woman peering at the goings-on) and slaves.

Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly* (1852, illustrated by Hammatt Billings) energized the abolitionist movement. In 1852 *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* sold 300,000 copies, one for every 20 literate adults. The main character, Uncle Tom, was a slave owned by the St Clare family on a plantation outside New Orleans. Some African-Americans considered Uncle Tom too passive and accepting of his circumstances, but Stowe and most abolitionists cited his kindness, devotion to employers, and willingness to embrace Christianity as human qualities justifying his emancipation.

African-American artist Robert S. Duncanson (1817–72) was a native of New York State who began his career as a house and sign painter, moving on to portraiture and finally to landscape. He illustrated a scene from Stowe’s novel, *Uncle Tom and Little Eva*, in 1853 (Figure 6.7), on commission from the Detroit abolitionist, Reverend James Conover. Duncanson chose a sentimental moment in the narrative when “[Uncle Tom] gazed on her as the Italian sailor gazes on his image of the child Jesus—with a mixture of reverence and tenderness” (www.gutenberg.org/

files/203/203-h/203-h.htm). Like Jesus instructing the elders in the temple, young Eva, the plantation owner's fair-haired, optimistic daughter, reads the Bible to the illiterate yet pious Uncle Tom. The embodiment of enlightenment and compassion, Eva is the light destined to lead her slaves out of the darkness of ignorance. Her dream—to move north, buy a home, and live in peace and freedom with the family slaves—was never realized. Like Jesus, she dies young (of tuberculosis), leaving her evangelical mission for others to accomplish. Duncanson hints at this outcome by setting the scene at sunset.

Slavery dwindled from the repertoire of artists following emancipation in 1863, but the African-Chippewa-American sculptor Edmonia Lewis (1845–1911) reminded the art-going public that legal freedom is not real freedom in *Forever Free* (1867, Figure 6.8). Orphaned at four, Lewis attended Oberlin College (the first to admit women and one of the first to admit African-Americans), before moving to Boston, where she apprenticed with a sculptor specializing in portrait busts and medals. Sale of her medals of Civil War heroes funded a trip to Italy in 1865, and she worked mostly in Rome among a supportive group of women sculptors who followed the Neoclassical tradition of sculpting in white marble. *Forever Free* recorded Lewis's personal response to the liberation of slaves, announced in Abraham Lincoln's 1 January 1863 "Emancipation Proclamation": "all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." Lewis



Figure 6.8
Edmonia Lewis, *Forever Free*,
1867. Marble, 105 × 56 ×
43 cm (41¼ × 22 × 43¼ in).
Howard University Gallery of
Art, Washington, DC.

shows a freed slave raising his head heavenward, thankful for his freedom. A shackle, broken but still attached to his arm, reminded viewers that in 1867, emancipation was more theoretical than actual. Beside him stands a genuflecting white girl with hands clasped, reminiscent of little Eva from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, whose prayers were finally, if posthumously, answered.

NATIVE AMERICANS: IDEAL OR FOE?

The rhetoric of colonial imagery centered on issues of domination and of superiority in the case of slavery. To Westerners, indigenous peoples inspired both admiration and fear. Particular interpretations depended partly on the then-current state of colonial relations, partly on the experience and knowledge of the artist or patron. The “noble savage” image of First Nation Americans was the first to reach European shores. This interpretation responded to circumstances: Native Americans helped immigrants survive in their new environment and facilitated commerce, especially the fur trade. Native Americans also attracted the attention of British philosophers Thomas Hobbes (*The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, 1650) and John Locke (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1689) as exemplars of people living a wholesome life according to divine intention. Hobbes and Locke promoted the lifestyle of First Nation Americans as a critique of the artificial social institutions and decadent cultural values of Europeans. The Iroquois seated pensively in West's *Death of General Wolfe* (Figure 3.1) typified this vision of a native people living in pre-lapsarian harmony equal, if not superior, to the bravest and most moral Europeans.

Native women were considered as virtuous as native men. They too seemed unspoiled by western materialism and possessed spiritual strength and dignity. Atala, whose story appeared in Chateaubriand's multi-volume *Genius of Christianity* (1802–07), epitomized such a woman. Significantly, her story was published at the moment when Napoleon reconciled with the Catholic Church after more than a decade of radical secularization under revolutionary governments. Chateaubriand himself was “born again” after his mother's death in 1798 and wanted to show that Christianity provided better models of human behavior than Greek and Roman history. Inspired by his 1789 trip to the US, Chateaubriand recounted the story of Atala, a half-breed girl (Spanish father, First Nation mother) who had sworn an oath of virginity to her mother, a Christian convert. Years later, Atala's tribe captured Chactas, a Natchez, and condemned him to death. She helped him escape and they fell in love. Rather than violate her vow to her mother, Atala committed suicide (a noble act in Roman times, but a mortal sin according to the Roman Catholic Church). Atala's resolve in honoring the promise to her mother inspired Chactas to convert to Christianity.

The “Atala” volume went through 11 editions between 1801 and 1805, and the heart-rending love story was familiar to the French reading public by the time Girodet exhibited his *The Funeral of Atala* (Figure 6.9) at the 1808 Paris Salon. Here, the limp body of an auburn-haired Atala is carried to its final resting place by a grieving Chactas and Father Aubrey, director of the local mission. Clad in a white gown symbolic of her virginity, neither her dress nor that of the men link the scene to a particular time or place. This calculated ambiguity encouraged Girodet's Parisian audience to empathize with the tragedy rather than focus on its exoticism. The only exotic elements are the half-naked body and tousled hair of Chactas and the grotto tomb. The cave entrance forms a natural gothic arch beyond which a cross appears



Figure 6.9

Anne-Louis Girodet, *The Funeral of Atala*, 1808. Oil on canvas, 167 × 210 cm (5 ft 5 in × 6 ft 11 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

silhouetted against the golden sunlight, illuminating Atala's corpse with the light of divine grace. Girodet illustrated the most poignant moment in the tragic romance and conveyed a message about filial piety and the promise of salvation through the redemptive power of Christianity.

Following the American Revolution, the prevailing attitude of Euro-Americans toward First Nation peoples took a negative turn. This resulted from resentment of the major First Nations, whose anti-settler attitude caused them first to side with the French until their defeat, then with the British during the American Revolution and the War of 1812. Cultural differences contributed to an adversarial relationship between Euro-Americans and Native Americans that was exacerbated by the appropriation of First Nation lands. One of the most notorious and manipulated events in Euro-Native relations occurred in the early 1780s, when Jane McCrea was killed during her transport by Mohawks to the camp of her fiancé, a British officer, during the American Revolution. Insufficient documentary evidence makes it impossible to know whether McCrea was killed by Mohawks, by the British party they encountered *en route*, or whether her death was accidental. Nonetheless, in 1784, Michael-René Hilliard published in the US the sensational bestseller, *Miss McCrea: an Historical Novel*, which portrayed McCrea as the victim of ruthless savages.

The legend of Jane McCrea affected the outlook of Americans, few of whom questioned the story's legitimacy. Its influence is demonstrated by the fact that more than 20 years after the incident, John Vanderlyn submitted to the Paris Salon *The*

Figure 6.10

John Vanderlyn, *The Murder of Jane McCrea*, 1804.
Oil on canvas, 83 × 67 cm
(32½ × 26½ in). Wadsworth
Atheneum Museum of Art,
Hartford.



Murder of Jane McCrea (1804, Figure 6.10), a work likely inspired by stanzas from a famous, nine-volume epic poem, *The Vision of Columbus*, published in 1787 by Joel Barlow, a close friend of fellow Yale University alumnus John Trumbull.

Here, two brawny Mohawks clad in loincloths and leather leggings, with shaved heads and feather embellishments, grab McCrea. Her kneeling position, outstretched hand, and bare breast emphasize her helplessness. With determined expressions and raised tomahawk, the two “savages” are about to scalp McCrea, as her fiancé rushes to her defense too late to save her. Vanderlyn created a hybrid work typical of the time, whose pathos and exoticism typified Romantic subject matter, but whose stage-like space and few, static figures conformed to Neoclassical compositional standards—a winning formula at the Salons of the early 1800s.

Beginning in 1816 and continuing into the 1840s, the US government pursued an official policy of “Indian Removal” that entailed resettling First Nations onto reservations west of the Mississippi River. This occurred by treaty or by force. Powerless to defend their property rights legally, First Nations often resorted to armed resistance. Each conflict reified Euro-American perceptions ascribing innate tendencies toward violence and savagery to Native Americans. This attitude was facilitated by a lack of publicity regarding the underhanded dealings of the US government and the huge number of Native American women and children who perished in the resettlement process.

George Catlin (1796–1872), a self-taught artist, set out to document the “vanishing race” of Native Americans in 1830. For the next seven years, he traveled



Figure 6.11
George Catlin, *White Cloud, Chief of the Ioways*, 1844–45.
Oil on canvas, 71 × 58 cm
(28 × 22⁷/₈ in). National Gallery
of Art, Washington, DC.

in the western territories, recording daily life among more than 40 nations. Ironically, Catlin conferred honor and respect to First Nations at a time when governmental policy was neutralizing them as a threat. He portrayed their leaders, including *White Cloud, Chief of the Ioways* (1844–45, Figure 6.11), who was killed by a Pawnee arrow years before Catlin painted his portrait in London (which appeared 150 years later on a 32-cent US stamp) based on earlier sketches. White Cloud relocated his tribe to a 200-square-mile reservation along the Missouri River following the 1833 Black Hawk Purchase, a sham treaty requiring his nation (and several others) to abandon their lands east of the Mississippi in exchange for five buildings, a blacksmith, a teacher, an interpreter, and livestock—a disadvantageous offer that he could not refuse.

While Géricault might have dared to represent the appalling aspects of Indian Removal, Catlin avoided dramatic and inflammatory events. Unlike Reynolds and Girodet, who forced non-Western sitters into templates conforming to European taste, Catlin highlighted his subject's singular coiffure, dress, and makeup, while conveying a dignity compliant with Western standards. Catlin's attitude was influenced by European ideas about “noble savages” and the supposed purity of cultures untainted by Western civilization. In an 1832 letter, he wrote: “these knights of the forest ... might vie with those of the Grecian youths in the beautiful rivalry of the Olympian games” (Catlin 1841: 15). While he strove for authenticity, Catlin's contention that he recorded “their actions, their customs, their amusements ... as they practice them in the uncivilized regions of their uninvaded country,” glossed over the drastic process of resettlement occurring during the 1830s (Catlin 1841: 5).

Armed with more than 500 paintings, Catlin exhibited his “Indian Gallery” in mid-western cities (Pittsburgh, St Louis, Cincinnati) in 1833. By 1837 the Gallery was touring the east coast, accompanied by lectures and guest appearances by Native Americans. Catlin’s expectation that the US government would eagerly purchase his collection proved unfounded, and in 1840 Catlin took the Indian Gallery to London. Catlin then showed it in Paris (entering several paintings in the Salon) and Amsterdam, but was forced to sell the Gallery to a private collector in 1852 to pay off his debts. From the outset, Catlin complemented his paintings with written documentation, and his *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians* (1841) and *Life amongst the Indians* (1857) sympathetically portrayed the habits and appearances of vanishing cultures.

ORIENTALISM EMERGES

Orientalism, a fascination with non-Western cultures, emerged as a direct consequence of colonialism and reflected changes in Western society. Despite claims of documenting with ethnographic accuracy the appearance and behaviors of exotic peoples, it instead projected Westerners’ hopes and anxieties. The story of Orientalism began in the seventeenth century with the Age of Exploration, an era when intellectual and geographical horizons broadened. The Orient, or the East, meaning Asia and North Africa, attracted scholarly attention. Oxford University established the first chair of Arabic studies in 1640, and in the next 150 years, scholars produced studies of the astronomy, history, law, and religion of Arabs, Persians, Ottomans (Turks), and Indians, and studied languages including Arabic, Bengali, Hebrew, Hindustani, Persian, Sanskrit, Samaritan, and Turkish. Oriental literature was translated and published, as were travel accounts of merchants and Jesuit missionaries, who collected original manuscripts and brought them back to Europe. In France alone, more than 100 accounts of travel to the Orient were published in the seventeenth century, igniting interest among the literate (about 20 percent of the population). In 1795, the Revolutionary Convention regime established a School of Living Oriental Languages in Paris where, by 1812, Arabic, Armenian, Persian, Sanskrit, and Turkish were taught. During the course of the nineteenth century, Berlin, Budapest, Cambridge, Leipzig, Moscow, Oxford, Paris, and Weimar all became important centers of Oriental studies.

During the eighteenth century, Orientalism influenced interior decor and became linked to attitudes toward gender. Eighteenth-century Paris witnessed the flowering of cultural “salons”—social gatherings where prominent artists, intellectuals, politicians, and courtiers gathered to discuss ideas. These were usually hosted by women, who encouraged the exchange of views by creating a casual atmosphere where restrictive courtly rules of behavior were relaxed. To facilitate discussion, new types of furniture developed, including the upholstered sofa, which originated in the Orient. In the seventeenth century, armchairs were reserved for the nobility, with prominent courtiers sitting on upholstered stools and royalty in armchairs. The eighteenth-century salon brought upholstered furniture into common use, inadvertently narrowing the gap among social classes. Sofas were soft, comfortable, and invited conversation. Significantly, the names given to these new types of furniture—ottoman, divan, *veillense à la turque*, *sultan*—indicated their origins in the Muslim world, which Europeans perceived as luxurious, lazy, and intimate. This furniture evoked associations with femininity because of their bed-like characteristics

of softness and the ability of sitters to recline; they encouraged fantasies about erotic escapades. This was the beginning of domestic interiors perceived as feminine spaces. The linkage among the concepts of femininity, eroticism, and Orientalism was reinforced through popular literature, solidifying into a common cultural attitude by the nineteenth century.

Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 was a catalyst to Oriental studies, because it marked the first systematic study of Egyptian culture. Ordered to secure "free and exclusive possession of the Red Sea," Napoleon brought along archaeologists, cartographers, geologists, and naturalists to study and document Egyptian culture. Part of the French fascination with Egypt lay in the fact that it seemed to Western eyes like a place unaltered since Biblical times—a direct link to the past, unlike the conceptually more remote civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome.

Vivant Denon (appointed first director of the Musée Napoléon in 1804) was a member of Napoleon's team. His two-volume *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt during the Campaigns of General Bonaparte*, was published in 1802. Although Denon left Egypt in 1799 due to local resistance and British offensives, he returned to France with a wealth of information and artifacts. This expedition whetted the appetite of Jean François Champollion ("the father of Egyptology"), who published his *Introduction to Egypt under the Pharaohs* in 1811; by 1822 he had deciphered the Rosetta stone, the key to understanding the language of hieroglyphics. French troops discovered the stone at the Rosetta Fortress in 1799, but it was confiscated by the British following Admiral Horatio Nelson's victorious naval blockade of Alexandria in 1801. It is now in London's British Museum, along with the Elgin Marbles. Motivated by the growing scholarship on Egypt (and eager to engage in cultural one-upmanship with the restored French monarchy), Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III purchased more than 2,000 Egyptian objects in 1822 from Giovanni Passalacqua, whom he made director of Europe's first Egyptian Museum (Berlin). The study of ancient Egyptian culture escalated in the nineteenth century and continued unabated into the twentieth.

Despite a wealth of scholarship, most people during the nineteenth century remained ignorant about foreign peoples and places. This made it easier to include them in one, inappropriately large category and to make inaccurate generalizations about them. Such was the case with native non-Western peoples (considered pagan and primitive), and also with Orientals, whose customs and values were evaluated in relationship to those of Westerners. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century misconceptions about Orientals survived virtually unaltered since the Middle Ages. Following the collapse of the Roman Empire and the rise of Islam in the seventh century, the traditional division between two Christian sects—Roman Catholic and Byzantine Orthodox—shifted to one between Christians in the West and Muslims in the East. Tales brought back from the Crusades (1095–1431) portrayed Muslim culture as the antithesis of Christian. Whereas Christians were considerate, diligent, honest, and kind, Muslims were ruthless, lazy, deceitful, and cruel. Such propaganda encouraged support for military campaigns (such as Napoleon's) mounted (unsuccessfully) to regain control of the Holy Land by the Christian West.

Literature helped to shape this perception of the Orient. In the eighteenth century, the most influential source for information about the Orient was *A Thousand and One Nights*, first translated from Arabic to French by Antoine Galland between 1704 and 1717, and published in numerous editions in French, English, and German. It tells the story of the beautiful and clever Scheherazade who kept her bored and

ruthless husband, King Shahryar, from having her executed by recounting marvelous stories (including Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sinbad) to him for 1,001 consecutive nights. In these tales, some dating to the year 1000, Oriental stereotypes were established. Their truth for Westerners was reinforced by repetition in subsequent Orientalist literature and by scientific investigations beginning in the early nineteenth century.

A Thousand and One Nights influenced Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who accompanied her husband, British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, on a two-year stay in Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1716. She wrote a widely read account of her experiences, *Turkish Embassy Letters*, that included a sneak peek into harem life and public bathing. Both her *Letters* and *A Thousand and One Nights* portrayed Orientals as undependable, luxury-loving, sensual, and self-indulgent—qualities condemned by Westerners. Yet its titillating exoticism, perfumed with eroticism and hints of danger, made the Orient a popular place of imaginary refuge for Westerners as their world underwent drastic and irrevocable transformation. On the one hand, the Orient represented liberation from restrictive “Christian” values—hard work, fidelity, self-restraint—at the same time as it represented a reassuring vision of a static and unchanging world.

ORIENT IMAGINED

The steady stream of new knowledge and artifacts about the Orient uncovered by scholars did little to modify the thrilling 1,001 nights image that captured the imagination of westerners, as evidenced by Ingres’s submission to the 1814 Salon, *La Grande Odalisque* (Figure 6.12; exhibited again at the 1855 Exposition universelle in Paris). Odalisque was the French term for a harem woman, and there were few more arousing fantasies to western men than the imagined activities within the well-guarded walls of an oriental harem. One could envision countless beautiful and scantily clad women awaiting the pleasure of their male master (and, allegedly, each other). For the western male, this was forbidden yet alluring territory, celebrated by many in the eighteenth century, including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in his 1782 opera *Abduction from the Seraglio*. Ingres, who never visited the Orient, was undoubtedly inspired by accounts such as Lady Montagu’s. In April 1717 she wrote:

The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies, and on the second their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed, yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes of our general mother. There were many amongst them as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido [Reni] or Titian, and most of their skins shinningly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair divided into many tresses hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or ribbon, perfectly representing the figures of the graces.

(Montagu 1762: 141)

William Hogarth associated serpentine line with the sensuousness of the female body in his 1753 essay *Analysis of Beauty*. Throughout the nineteenth century, artists relied on this strategy for eroticizing their work.



Figure 6.12
Jean-Auguste Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 91 × 163 cm (3 ft × 5 ft 4 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Ingres painted his vision of a concubine in a near life-size image, whose minute detail and tangible textures appear compellingly realistic, until we take a closer look. Clad only in a turban and gold jewelry, this sinuous beauty has a distorted torso: the distance from waist to thigh is improbable, as is the asymmetry in her measurements from underarm to hip. While her boneless body, with its infinite flexibility, may have stimulated erotic fantasies, it too, is unrealistic. She gazes at the (male) viewer with a look of passive availability. The artist/viewer seems to be alone with her, standing close, in her luxurious silk- and fur-lined bower. Like *Jane McCrea*, this too is a Neoclassical-Romantic hybrid: the detailed realism, stasis, and planar composition typified Neoclassicism, while the erotic, exotic subject characterized Romanticism. Perhaps at this time, when legions of Frenchmen had died in battle and Napoleon's dream of world domination had vanished, Ingres's *Odalisque* provided French men with a desirable escapist fantasy. Research indicates that one of the most frequent male dreams in the mid-nineteenth century was of sexual gratification in a harem or orgy, which may explain the steady production of harem scenes throughout the nineteenth century. Artists of all nationalities painted them, often on commission from private collectors.

It was not only women and ethnic types that fascinated Western armchair travelers. All aspects of the Orient, with its unfamiliar architecture, customs, dress, furnishings, and vegetation intrigued Western male viewers, whose imaginations were stimulated by meticulously painted and abundantly detailed images. Like Ingres, Théodore Chassériau (1819–56) and Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904) typified those artists using Orientalism as a justification to represent nude, sensual, and available women. In art, male viewers found a safe, if imaginary, outlet for urges suppressed by the stifling prudery governing nineteenth-century gender relations, where leisurely erotic play (at least with one's spouse) was discouraged. At the same time, the pioneering trips of Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps (1803–60) and Delacroix inaugurated a surge in artist travel to the Orient to gather visual material for authentic documentary images. For instance, the numerous sketches made by Chassériau during his two-month stay in Algeria in 1846 provided the basis for the Orientalist paintings of his final decade. Chassériau studied with Ingres in the 1830s and worked mainly as a church decorator until his visit to North Africa. In *The Tepidarium* (1853,

Figure 6.13

Théodore Chassériau,
The Tepidarium, 1853.
Oil on canvas, 171 × 258 cm
(5 ft 7¼ in × 8 ft 5½ in).
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 6.13), Orient meets ancient Rome, and hygiene meets harem. The tepidarium was the central hall of a Roman bath. It contained a warm pool, but was most important as the center for socializing before and after taking the hot and cold baths, as described by Lady Montagu. Such bathing practices were common in Ottoman-occupied lands, but not in French-occupied Algeria. Even if they were, Chassériau would never have gained access to such a place.

Similarly, Gérôme, who studied at the École des Beaux Arts, exhibited regularly at the Salon, and enjoyed a successful career of government commissions, turned to Orientalist subjects following a trip to North Africa (Egypt) in 1856 (Figure 6.14). The subject of European women attended by dark-skinned servants had been popular since the eighteenth century. Here, the viewer is an unnoticed voyeur observing a young woman's bath, her nudity emphasized by the clothed and turbaned servant and the pile of colorful fabrics spilling over the wall. There can be little doubt that Gérôme, who painted *Moorish Bath* in 1870, purposefully created an Orientalist interpretation of Manet's infamous *Olympia* (1863, Figure 11.10), which scandalized visitors to the 1865 Salon. While nudity, bare feet, and mixed races give *The Tepidarium* and *Moorish Bath* an exotic flair, the vagueness of title and detail permit viewers to imagine these scenes as either ancient or modern, reinforcing western perceptions of the Orient as a place where time stood still. Much Orientalist art was erotic. It expressed on the one hand the urge of nineteenth-century bourgeois males to escape the repressive social decorum they had established for themselves, and on the other, a desire to control and pacify women during a period when they were beginning to agitate for equality.

DELACROIX'S ORIENTALISM

The Ottoman Empire—Turkish, Muslim, and Eastern—epitomized degenerate Orientalism for many nineteenth-century Europeans. Thus, when Greeks began agitating for emancipation in 1821 after two centuries of domination, European nations rushed to their aid. Greece, in the wake of the Neoclassical era, represented



Figure 6.14
Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Moorish Bath*, 1870. Oil on canvas,
51 × 41 cm (20 × 16 in).
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

for Europeans the birthplace of Western civilization—its culture, political institutions, and aesthetic and philosophical ideas all had their roots in ancient Greece. The premise that Orientalist (Byzantine-Christian as well as Muslim and Far Eastern) cultures survived unaltered since antiquity led Europeans to elide the character and values of modern Greeks with those who lived 2,500 years earlier and to view the Greek struggle for independence as the latest effort to free the Christian West from Muslim domination. Because of its Orthodox Christian religion and exotic music and culture, Greece could just as easily function as an Oriental culture in Western eyes, but the constellation of factors coalescing in the 1820s situated Greece as the easternmost border of Western civilization.

The highly publicized departure of British poet Lord Byron for the Greek battlefield in 1823, the paintings of Delacroix, and published reports from the front combined to bring public attention and sympathy to the Greek cause. For the British, it was as if the metope sculptures of the Parthenon symbolizing the victorious battle of the Greeks (men) over the Persians (centaurs) had reemerged in modern guise—the latest chapter in the war between civilization and barbarism. One of the most grizzly early events of the war was the genocide on the prosperous trading island of Chios in April 1822; Ottoman troops reduced the island's population from 120,000 to 1,800 in less than one month. More than 30,000 were killed, and the rest of the inhabitants were either starved or forced into slavery. Delacroix imagined the event in a painting exhibited at the 1824 Salon (Figure 6.15), the same year Constable exhibited *The Hay*

Figure 6.15

Eugène Delacroix, *Massacre at Chios*, 1824. Oil on canvas, 417 × 354 cm (13 ft 8 in × 11 ft 7 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Wain (Figure 5.9). The cruelty of Ottoman troops affirmed Orientalist preconceptions and enraged the European public, which collected money for the Greek cause and sent volunteers to fight.

Delacroix composed effective publicity for the Greek cause in a heartrending scene of begging, bleeding, exhausted, and resigned Greeks, whose weakened bodies are unable to resist either the pull of gravity or their Ottoman attackers. Across a stage-like foreground, the artist displayed these captives, who respond to their common calamity with a variety that seems to mark a definitive break with the lucid, unified Neoclassical pictorial structure—the small child grabs the breast of his dying mother, a nude woman struggles in vain with her mounted captor (who will presumably rape her), an old woman averts her eyes from the horror, a man expires from his abdominal wound, and a pathetic, Ugolino-like grouping depicts a wounded Greek man unable to comfort the suffering children begging for his assistance. The viewer's eye moves from group to group contemplating their individual tragedies against a sketchily rendered background of slaughter and arson. These Greeks are far from the ideal of human perfection imagined in the eighteenth century. Their dark features make them indistinguishable from the Turks and their physical weakness suggests the degenerative effects of two centuries of oppression by non-Christian Orientals. Delacroix anchored his image partly in facts gleaned from newspapers and conversations with an eye witness. We know this from reading Delacroix's diaries and letters, which have since been published.

Salvation for the Greeks was soon at hand. In 1827, a fleet comprising British, French, and Russian ships destroyed the combined fleet of the Ottoman sultan and Egyptian ruler Mehmet Ali in a naval battle at Navarino, which led directly to the liberation of Greece. Independence was declared in 1832, and the new nation placed itself under the protection of Bavarian King Otto I, at the suggestion of the British, French, and Russian allies, who were worried about the security of this border on the Orient. Despite enormous critical controversy over the painting's innovative character (arbitrary color and brushwork, lack of finish, psychological isolation of individual figures) Delacroix's sale of *Massacre at Chios* to the French government funded his 1825 trip to England and signaled official approval of his art.

While Ingres relied solely on his imagination for *Odalisque*, his colleague and rival Delacroix drew on sketches made during a four-month journey to North Africa in 1832, as part of a diplomatic mission to Morocco to negotiate the borders of France's newest colony, Algeria. *Women of Algiers* (1834, Figure 6.16) is an imaginary composition with ethnographically accurate details. Enclosed in their heavily patterned domestic interior, these women were birds in a gilded cage like their bourgeois Western sisters. These Algerian women appear to possess three desirable female characteristics divided among three different groups in the West in response to bourgeois notions of propriety and status: pleasure-giving prostitutes, obedient servants, and faithful wives.

Delacroix conveyed the impression that he had penetrated the secret spaces of the harem—the viewer's presence is presumably noticed by the woman on the left, but does not disrupt the relaxed reverie and smoking. These women seem complacent in their captivity, disinterested in the opportunity for escape through the open door. The thick brushstrokes and jewel-like colors of *Women of Algiers* enhanced a sense of informal luxury. Delacroix's technique was far looser than the academic standard set by David, reverting to a painterliness that in the eighteenth century was associated with femininity. This departure from contemporary academic practice suggested a



Figure 6.16
Eugène Delacroix, *Women of Algiers*, 1834.
Oil on canvas, 180 × 229 cm (5 ft 11 in × 7 ft 6 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

privileging of tactility and sensation over reason. Modernist pioneer Paul Cézanne admired *Women of Algiers*: “When I speak of the joy of color for color’s sake, this is what I mean ... And he has a sense of the human being, of life in movement, of warmth” (Gasquet 1921: 108).

ORIENTALIST SCULPTURE

Charles Cordier (1827–1905), a pupil of Rude and admirer of Delacroix, was appointed “ethnographic sculptor” in 1851 at the Museum of Natural History in Paris, a post he kept for 15 years. The French government sent him on expeditions to Algeria in 1856, and later to Greece and Egypt. The purpose of these journeys—enthusiastically endorsed by French Emperor Napoleon III—was to compile data for a gallery of ethnic types intended to promote appreciation for and understanding of racial types. *The Jewish Woman of Algiers* (1862, Figure 6.17) typifies this endeavor. This anonymous individual represents a type, based on the assumption that members of an ethnic, or in this case a religious, group possess common physical characteristics. To enhance the authenticity of his sculptures, Cordier pioneered the creation of polychrome works composed of various materials. The brown patina (finish) of the bronze conveys a lifelike impression, enhanced by the use of white onyx from Algeria for her robe, a colorful inlaid necklace, and a headpiece embellished with gilding. *The Jewish Woman of Algiers* is portrayed with dignity and grace rather than as an erotic object of delectation. Critics condemned Cordier’s unorthodox combination of materials,

Figure 6.17

Charles Cordier, *The Jewish Woman of Algiers*, 1862. Algerian onyx-marble, bronze and gilt-bronze, enamel, amethyst eyes; white marble socles; red and white marble pedestal with gilt-bronze mounts and ornaments, life-size, 39½ × 24 × 11 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

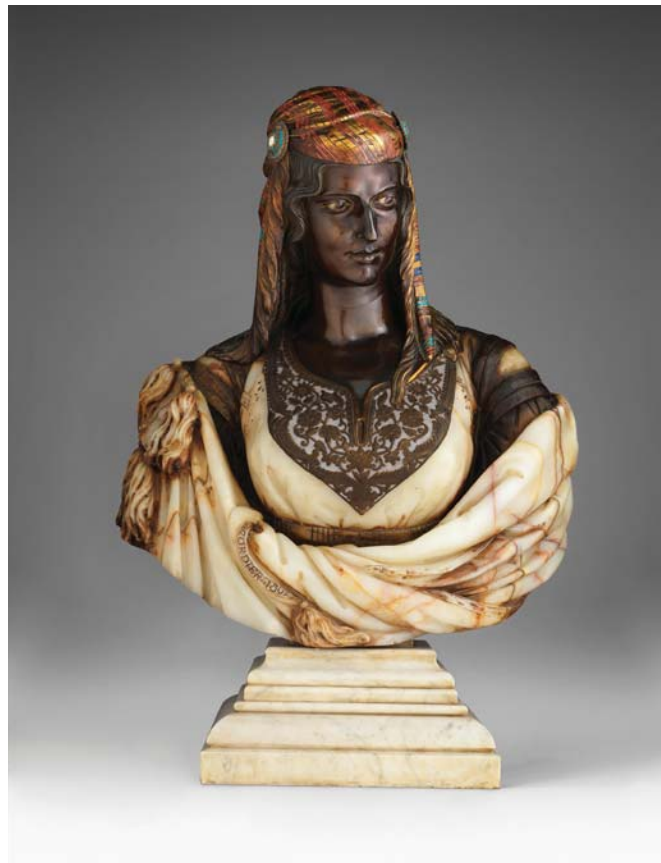




Figure 6.18
Hiram Powers, *The Greek Slave*,
1843 at the Great Exhibition
of 1851 at Crystal Palace.
Lithograph by John Absalom.
Victoria & Albert Museum,
London.

considering it a threat to the integrity of traditional sculpture. A technique of making truly lifelike sculptures had been invented in Paris by Madame Tussaud during the 1790s. She perfected the process of using wax for skin, and real objects, such as hair, glass eyes, and clothing. Because of her use of non-traditional art materials, Tussaud's three-dimensional portraits were not considered sculpture. Cordier, by including non-traditional material, also transgressed conventional boundaries, but not enough to endanger his works qualifying as art. In the 1880s, Degas further tested the boundaries by exhibiting a wax sculpture adorned with clothing and a wig (Figure 12.11).

Even after its conclusion, the Greek Revolution continued to capture the imagination of artists. In 1843, Hiram Powers (1805–73) sculpted *The Greek Slave* (Figure 6.18), the best-known American sculpture of the nineteenth century. Here, Powers depicted in life size a Greek girl (they were prized love-slaves in the Ottoman Empire) captured by Turks and auctioned at a slave market. She is naked. A cross hangs over her shawl, signifying her Christianity, and a locket suggests a missing husband. Manacled, she is unable to clothe or defend herself, beyond modestly attempting to cover her genitals. Executed in pure white marble, Powers intended *Greek Slave* to rival the famous ancient statue the *Medici Venus*, a Roman copy of a Greek sculpture named after the Renaissance family that owned it. Powers produced six replicas of the *Greek Slave*, and following a successful American tour in 1847, it was exhibited in the sculptor's Florence studio and at the 1851 Crystal Palace exhibition in London.

This is another instance of an erotic vision of female nudity made acceptable by the narrative constructed around it. Artist and critics were in denial about any sexual connotations. "It is not her person but her spirit that stands exposed," responded Powers when asked to explain his sculpture (Green 1982: 32). Critics praised *Greek Slave* as a paragon of the passivity and modesty upheld as a feminine ideal. While the sculpture ostensibly referred to an Oriental oppression that had since been resolved, it also suggested that danger was ever-present, and that Westerners must remain vigilant. There were two additional contexts in which contemporaries could interpret Powers's sculpture: women's rights and slavery. Significantly, slave auctions

were commonplace in the American South during the 1840s, when Powers made his sculpture. The artist never admitted abolitionist sympathies, and critics did not publish any such comments, but it seems entirely possible that at least some viewers may have associated the helpless *Greek Slave* with the US's own slave population.

The 1840s was also a decade of agitation by feminists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott that culminated in the 1848 Seneca Falls convention, where the American suffrage movement officially began. This vision of a woman in chains, whose outward beauty confirmed her moral purity, reminded many women of their own plight. Shackled by a legal system that denied women control of their bodies (medical help required a man's permission), children (men determined their upbringing), education (women were barred from most colleges and universities), money (all earnings belonged to the husband or father), and activities, public and private, *Greek Slave* could as well have been titled "Modern Woman."

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

As the world became smaller during the course of the nineteenth century due to improved communications, competition for markets and resources intensified as did a need for peace so that commerce could flourish. World's fairs—huge temporary exhibitions of conquest, culture, and technology—provided forums in which nations could peacefully exhibit their achievements. The first world's fair—The Great Exhibition of 1851, known as the Crystal Palace Exhibition—took place in London. It was conceived by Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, in order to bring together the arts and industries of the civilized world with the goal of promoting good relations for diplomatic and economic purposes. The exhibition enjoyed unexpected success, with more than six million visitors. While the exhibition was ostensibly internationalist and friendly in character, beneath the surface, a fierce competition for supremacy in invention, production, power, and wealth occurred. Industry and technology were displayed in the Crystal Palace, the largest glass and metal structure yet constructed. It was designed by greenhouse architect Joseph Paxton (1803–65). In addition, nations were allocated space to build representative architectural installations, giving visitors an idea about the appearance and character of their lands, peoples, and colonial possessions. Participants included Africa, Ceylon, China, Egypt, India, Malta, Persia, Tunis, Turkey, and the West Indies. The inclusion of colonial objects and peoples enabled viewers to see at first hand the exotic places they knew from written accounts and illustrations. However, because of the artificial circumstances, these displays could only show a glimpse of a people and its culture. Visitors did not get an accurate or impartial idea of life in these far-away places. Instead, the displays tended to affirm belief in the superiority of European culture.

The financial and critical success of the Crystal Palace precipitated a flood of similar exhibitions. In Paris, the Exposition universelle of 1867 attracted 11 million visitors, the 1878 Exposition 16 million, the 1889 Exposition 28 million, and the 1900 Exposition 50 million visitors. From the 1850s to the 1890s, five to ten international world's fairs were held each decade. There could be no doubt that despite its increasing complexity, the world was becoming a smaller, globally interconnected place.

CONCLUSION

Economics and industrialization fueled the engine of colonialism. They combined with imperialism to encourage a self-conscious competition among nations. For some individuals, it kindled fascination with new peoples and landscapes, while for others it affirmed the superiority of the homeland. Those dissatisfied with the state of Western society probed indigenous non-Western cultures for solutions to contemporary problems. Those content with the status quo viewed unfamiliar people and places with suspicion. Encounters with slaves and native peoples evoked a wide range of responses: admiration, loathing, even identity. Ignorance and superficial knowledge made it easy for Westerners to project onto these groups—above all “Orientals”—anxieties and longings. Significantly, Western urbanites adopted similar attitudes toward indigenous peasants in their own nations. While information about non-Westerners and peasants often derived from first-hand, even scientific accounts, it was manipulated to conform to a preexisting conceptual framework for coming to terms with unfamiliar experiences. The distortions and misunderstandings of this approach continue to pose problems in a global world.

For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter and to see what Delacroix's Paris studio looks like, go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.



New Audiences, New Approaches

In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, art reflecting bourgeois taste and values was on the rise. Called by different names in different countries—Victorian, Biedermeier, Golden Age—it represented the visual manifestation of a new revolution that accelerated after 1815—the Social Revolution. Made possible by the earlier revolutions—American, French, and Industrial—it established the norms of the world we live in today. The aristocracy, whose power and wealth had insured the dominance of its values for centuries, was eclipsed by the bourgeoisie (affluent upper middle class) during the period 1815–48, which began with the fall of Napoleon and ended with Europe-wide revolutions. This was an exciting and tension-filled era, as the old establishment sought desperately to maintain control, and a new group fortified by greater numbers and greater wealth gained the upper hand. During this period, the values and norms of the bourgeoisie replaced those of the aristocracy.

MODERNISM, URBANIZATION, INSTABILITY

The final defeat of Napoleon by British forces led by the Duke of Wellington, on the Belgian fields at Waterloo in 1815, marked the end of large-scale imperialist expansion on the European continent (until the advent of Adolf Hitler in the 1930s). The subsequent maneuvering of the five European powers (Austria, Britain, France, Prussia, and Russia) evidenced a competitive spirit that signaled the rise of nationalistic sentiments. With the stated purpose of restoring stability to the war-weary continent, the Congress of Vienna (1815) approved a peace treaty rewarding the five powers (remarkably including France) at the expense of less powerful nation-states. Russia gained much of Poland (partitioned among Austria, Prussia, and Russia in the 1790s) and all of Finland (previously under Swedish control—Sweden had made the diplomatic error of installing a Napoleonic general, Jean Bernadotte, as their king in 1813). Prussia gained Alsace-Lorraine (on the French border) and (previously Swedish) Pomerania. Norway was taken from Denmark and given to Sweden, Austria lost Belgium (consolidated with Holland, since both had Dutch-speaking populations) but acquired territory in northern Italy, and Britain acquired colonial possessions, including the Cape Colony (South Africa), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and part of the West Indies, in exchange for Senegal (site of the *Medusa* disaster), which was returned to France.

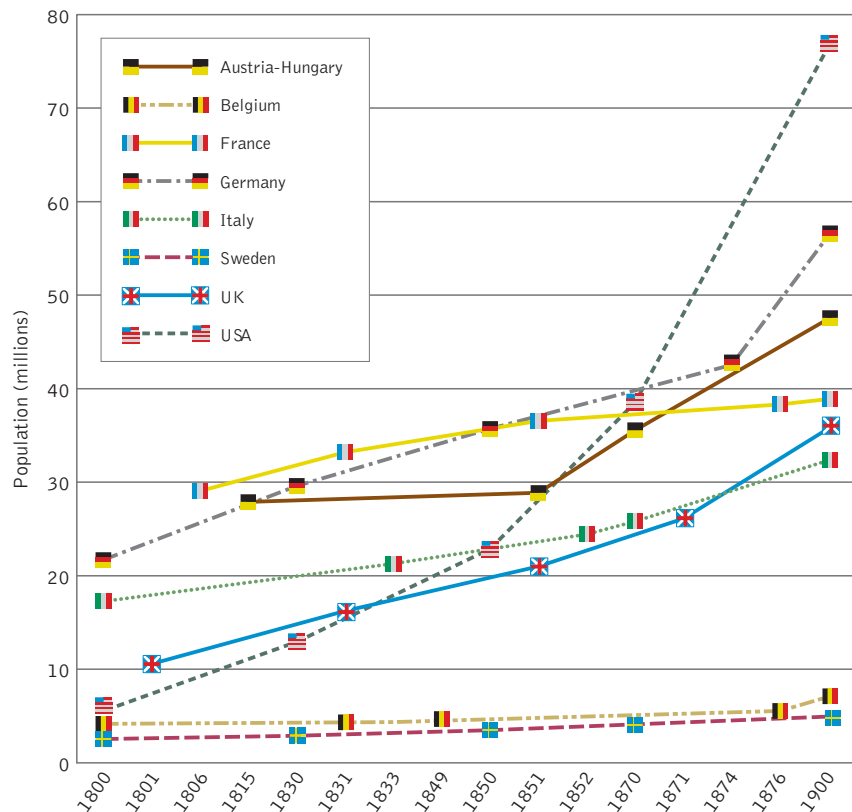


Figure 7.1
James Gillray, *France. Britain. Freedom. Slavery*, 28 July 1789.

The guiding principle at the Congress of Vienna was restoration—restoration to the stability that reigned in Europe during the era of absolute monarchy before the French Revolution (Figure 7.1). Thus, the Bourbon family returned to the French throne, and regimes throughout Europe adopted policies intended to inhibit the loss of political power and Church/aristocratic privilege. Limits on suffrage were one method—in France, for instance, with a total population of about 30 million in 1815, only about 100,000 men could vote. Other restrictions included limits on the size of public meetings, bans on demonstrations, prohibition of student organizations, and press censorship.

On a continent whose population increased 70 percent between 1800 and 1850 despite an emigration of three million people, and whose cities (where ideas circulated most intensively) grew at an even faster rate, maintaining the *status quo*, much less returning to the good old days, was unrealistic. Industrial cities like Birmingham grew 4–500 percent in the first 50 years of the nineteenth century, and the number of cities with populations over 100,000 more than doubled during that period as well (23 to 52 in Europe and zero to six in the US). Fastest growing were suburbs, the main bastion of the bourgeoisie—the suburbs surrounding Birmingham, for instance, grew 16-fold between 1800 and 1850. The economic situation also changed drastically, with industrial wages falling steadily and incomes of professionals and entrepreneurs rising to the extent that they accumulated wealth which they then invested in enterprises such as real estate, joint stock railroad companies, well-appointed homes, and even art.

After 1830, the rapid expansion of railways further facilitated the exchange of people and ideas—between 1830 and 1850 the amount of rail increased from 30 kilometers to more than 23,000. Literacy rates also rose steadily as a result of obligatory schooling for children aged 7–14 (a law seldom enforced), primarily in



Data Box 7: Nineteenth-Century Population

Lithograph

A printed image made from a lithographic stone. An image is drawn with a grease crayon onto a special kind of limestone. Water is then applied to the surface, adhering to the undrawn areas. Ink is then applied with a roller and adheres to the grease crayon drawing. A sheet of paper is placed on the stone and sent through a press, which transfers the drawn design from stone to paper. In principle, an unlimited number of identical prints can be made. The process was developed in 1796 by Alois Senefelder. See <http://www.moma.org/interactives/projects/2001/whatisaprint/print.html>.

Protestant countries where it was considered essential for everyone to be able to read the Bible (for Catholics and Orthodox Christians, religious understanding came first and foremost from the parish priest). Sweden had Europe's highest literacy rate because priests there annually tested the reading skills of inhabitants of their parishes (a practice instituted in the seventeenth century), with responsibility for teaching in the hands of the estate owner or head of family. Denmark passed compulsory education legislation in 1814, as did Prussia in 1819, Sweden in 1842, England in 1870, Canada in 1872, France in 1881, and Holland in 1900. Although literacy increased steadily with the institution of state- and church-funded primary schools, by 1850, only the US, Scandinavia, Holland, France, and the German-speaking countries had literacy rates higher than 50 percent. Literacy translated directly into career opportunities. Members of the aristocracy traditionally held positions such as postmaster, surveyor, and judge, but literate commoners could also hold public office. By the century's end, the vast majority of civil servants were commoners.

Another consequence of literacy was the expansion of newspapers, spreading knowledge of current events and ideas with unprecedented rapidity. Technology made the nineteenth-century print revolution possible beginning with the invention of the iron press in the 1790s, increasing print production from ten to 250 sheets per hour. Friedrich Koenig's steam-powered press enabled the *London Times* to print 1,100 sheets per hour in 1814, and by 1865, William Bullock's roll-fed rotary press (the kind one sees in vintage films) allowed the production of 11,000 complete, double-sided newspapers per hour. The invention of **lithography** by Alois Senefelder in 1796

permitted the almost infinite reproduction of images from a single stone. This meant that illustrated periodicals were now feasible, with the greater sense of journalistic realism they conveyed. In the 1850s, lithographic printing was mechanized, and a decade later, zinc plates replaced lithography stones in an exponentially faster rotary press. It was now technically possible for the first time in history for words and images to reach vast audiences at affordable prices.

These statistics indicate that the conservative forces of restoration were fighting a losing battle. Growing economic discrepancy between rich and poor and political discrepancy between empowered and disenfranchised generated social tension and instability because people were better informed about existing conditions. The frequent assassinations and rebellions during this period indicated widespread discontent and demonstrated the difficulty absolutist governments faced in maintaining stability. Brutally suppressed liberal revolutions broke out in Naples, Portugal, Sardinia, and Spain during the early 1820s. Disgruntled members of the Russian military took advantage of confusion following the death of Alexander I in December 1825 to mount the failed Decembrist Revolution. In 1830, France and Belgium experienced successful revolutions, although in France, the government's inadequacy in responding to popular demands resulted in a failed coup attempt by Napoleon's nephew Louis in 1836.

"But before occupying ourselves with the different categories of crowds, we must first of all examine the characteristics common to them all. We shall set to work like the naturalist, who begins by describing the general characteristics common to all the members of a family before concerning himself with the particular characteristics which allow the differentiation of the genera and species that the family includes ...

The most striking peculiarity presented by a psychological crowd is the following: Whoever be the individuals that compose it, however like or unlike be their mode of life, their occupations, their character, or their intelligence, the fact that they have been transformed into a crowd puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind which makes them feel, think, and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual of them would feel, think, and act were he in a state of isolation. There are certain ideas and feelings which do not come into being, or do not transform themselves into acts except in the case of individuals forming a crowd. The psychological crowd is a provisional being formed of heterogeneous elements, which for a moment are combined, exactly as the cells which constitute a living body form by their reunion a new being which displays characteristics very different from those possessed by each of the cells singly."

Source: Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895). Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002, pp. 3–4.

Respect for the aristocracy and its values vanished for the majority of Westerners during the first half of the nineteenth century. The bourgeoisie, with a value-system embedded in principles of honor, hard work, fairness, respect for others, and love of family became the new norm-setter in morality, behavior, and taste. It was easier for people to identify with self-made men whose principles resembled their own than with the frivolous and unfamiliar world of aristocrats. Furthermore, the possibility of joining the bourgeoisie, whose membership was determined by worldly success, was far greater than the aristocracy, whose membership was largely determined by noble birth.

BOURGEOIS MORALITY AND THE SEPARATION OF SPHERES

Vigée-LeBrun's 1787 portrait of Marie-Antoinette (Figure 1.7) represents one of the first murmurings of a desire to portray monarchs as models of bourgeois morality. Vigée-LeBrun emphasized the Queen's role as loving mother, a choice dictated by political expediency that initiated a trend among monarchs. Typical of these was *Windsor Castle in Modern Times* (1841–45, Figure 7.2), by Edwin Landseer (1802–1873). Landseer's father was a printmaker and his six siblings were all artists. Landseer studied privately, then at the Royal Academy (RA), first exhibiting there when he was 13. His brother Thomas engraved Landseer's most famous paintings, many of which depicted animals with human-like qualities (Figure 10.1). Queen Victoria was his most loyal patron, and in this portrait Landseer showed the 22-year-old Victoria not as Queen of England but rather as an exemplary wife and mother. Here, order and harmony prevail in both the domestic, feminine sphere and in the outdoor, masculine sphere governed by Prince Albert, Victoria's husband. This vision contrasts with the disharmony pervading Hogarth's *Tête à Tête* (Figure 1.3, 1.4) a century earlier. The sharp division between feminine and masculine spheres that began with David's *Horatii* (Figure 2.8) is here demarcated by dress (Albert wears hunting boots, Victoria, white satin), by dogs (the playful short-legged house pets versus the long-limbed hunter), and by birds (the exotic parrot held by little Victoria versus the edible game brought back by the competent and manly Albert, family provider). The health, harmony, order, and prosperity revealed by this glimpse into the private life of the royal family at their Windsor Castle residence reassured viewers that the nation itself was in the hands of morally upstanding people like themselves. It also sanctioned the separation of spheres and the normalcy of subordinating women to men.



What does Simon Schama have to say about *Windsor Castle in Modern Times*? Find out at www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

Figure 7.2

Edwin Landseer, *Windsor Castle in Modern Times*, 1841–45. Oil on canvas, 113 × 145 cm (44½ × 56¾ in). St James's Palace, London.



Paragraph 213 of the French Civil Code (1804) expressed the subordination of women as a foundation of law: “a husband owes protection to his wife, a wife, obedience to her husband” (Bonaparte 1827: 59). This idea was repeated with such frequency and conviction that soon many people believed it, women included. Popular writers like Hannah More advised women on successfully carrying out their natural, gendered duties, justifying her ideas with the power of biological analogy:

The fin was not more clearly bestowed on the fish, nor the wing given to the bird that he should fly, than superior strength of body, and a firmer texture of mind was given to man, that he might preside in the deep and daring scenes of action and of council: in the complicated acts of government, in the contention of arms, in the intricacies and depths of science, in the bustle of commerce, and in those professions which demand a higher reach, and a wider range of powers.

(More 1800: 21)

Although women had been instrumental in organizing the cultural and intellectual salons that nurtured the seeds of revolution in the eighteenth century, they were gradually excluded from the debates taking place in the public spaces of cafes, clubs, and men’s organizations like Masonic Lodges in the nineteenth century. Separation of spheres was exacerbated by industrialization and urbanization; factories, offices, and workshops were no longer close to where people lived. This contrasted with the traditional structure of the countryside, where family and land formed a single, integrated economic unit, or the pre-industrial period, where family business and living quarters often coexisted in the same building with men and women collaborating in the running of both.

BIEDERMEIER AND THE EMERGENCE OF MIDDLE-CLASS CULTURE

As was the case with Naturalism, Neoclassicism, and Romanticism, the Biedermeier style evolved over several decades. Images reflecting the bourgeois preference for depictions of everyday life emerged earliest in the locations where bourgeois values—spurred by economic conditions as well as philosophical and political ideas—were first to emerge. A commercial hub and center of immigration and manufacturing since the fourteenth century, Hamburg, with its elected government and influential merchant class, was Europe’s first truly modern city. Its large Dutch population influenced the city’s development economically and morally, particularly in the formation of associations like the Patriotic Society. Established in 1765, the Patriotic Society, influenced by radical Enlightenment ideas, sponsored banks, credit unions, homes for the elderly, libraries, museums, and schools, convinced that economic prosperity and social stability depended on the well-being of all citizens. The bourgeois values and democratic tendencies that generated social transformation in the nineteenth century were anticipated in Hamburg. The Danish painter Jens Juel (1745–1802) recorded as early as the 1760s the leisure life of Hamburg’s bourgeoisie in his pioneering painting *Promenading in a Park* (1764, Figure 7.3). Juel studied at the Copenhagen Academy, taught there from 1784, and was named director in 1795. He was also court painter to Christian VII beginning in 1780, and artist C.W. Eckersberg married his two daughters (sequentially).

Figure 7.3

Jens Juel, *Promenading in a Park*, 1764. Oil on canvas, 36 × 29 cm (14 × 11½ in). National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen.



In *Promenading in a Park* elegant Hamburgers enjoy a sunny afternoon (indicated by long shadows) in a park adjacent to a manor house. A couple walks arm-in-arm along a path, and, at center, a man seems to engage an elegantly dressed woman in conversation. She leans attentively toward the man, and delicately holds a fringed parasol for protection from the sun. Beside her stands a plainly dressed woman, perhaps her servant or a passerby, whose attention is also arrested by the animated gentleman. Behind them a gardener pushes a wheelbarrow, while above, a lively, muscular sculpture of Poseidon seems to observe the goings on. The gentleman, whose back is to us, draws the viewer into the scene. Like Poseidon, the artist/viewer watches what appears to be a casual, chance encounter. Might such an image be a source for Copenhagen Academy student Caspar David Friedrich's back-facing figures? Juel specialized in portraiture, but was fascinated by the shifting world around him: northern lights, lightening storms, urban life. This painting anticipates by a century the Impressionist interest in capturing ordinary moments of modern life. Despite his status as a court artist and director of a royal academy, Juel possessed an unusual degree of curiosity and receptivity to new ways of thinking.

Like Juel, the French painter Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845) also represented the daily life of the bourgeoisie. In *The Downpour* (1803, Figure 7.4), a prosperous young couple accompanied by three children and a nanny stand on a plank in a muddy Parisian street. They seem miraculously unaffected by the deluge that has caused pedestrians to open umbrellas and well-dressed women to ride piggyback through



Figure 7.4
Léopold Boilly, *The Downpour*,
1803. Oil on canvas, 33 × 41 cm
(12 × 16 in). Musée du Louvre,
Paris.

the street. The father emphatically resists an appeal (for money?) from a man on the left, as his son observes. Providing unrequested services for the affluent in hopes of remuneration was an urban commonplace, one which few artists have documented. Significantly, the men are socially engaged and lead the way, while the women form a compact group detached from the goings on. Boilly directed attention to the family using Neoclassical devices—illumination, foreground placement parallel to picture plane, and genders distinctly separated in a stage-like space. This bourgeois family’s social status is also marked by dress—the wife wears an elegant scarf and feathered hat, while the nurse wears a simple turban. Boilly’s painting attests to the increasing visibility and influence of the bourgeoisie during the Napoleonic era.

As governments restricted civil liberties and made public life insecure, even dangerous, the home assumed corresponding importance as a refuge. The era between 1815 and 1848 (the Congress of Vienna and European-wide revolutions) is referred to in German as the Biedermeier era, a name evoking cozy comfort and contentedness. The term combines one of the most common German surnames, Maier/Meyer/Meier with the word “*bieder*,” which means honest and uncomplicated, the German equivalent of an “average Joe.” It comes from the name of a character appearing regularly in the popular newspaper *Fliegende Blätter* (Flying Pages) published in Munich between 1855 and 1857. The village schoolteacher Gottlieb Biedermaier cared little for events in the world around him, as long as all was well in his home and garden. Biedermaier epitomized the selfishness and complacency of the bourgeoisie, which withdrew from the repressive public sphere to the prosperous security of their suburban homes. These homes were often protected by hedges, fences, and gates—just like the estates of the aristocracy, although smaller in scale.

The Hülsenbecks of Hamburg were typical of such families, with their tidy and well-ordered suburban home (Figure 4.5). Children, as evidenced in the paintings of Runge, Amerling, and Landseer, constituted the central focus of the bourgeois

home. These citizens-in-training required particular moral and intellectual qualities as well as social and cultural skills in order to take their proper places in society. It was the father's responsibility to make this economically feasible and the mother's duty to carry it out.

While the term Biedermeier was coined at the end of the nineteenth century to describe the character of an earlier era, it was applied, beginning in the early twentieth century, to classify the era's style of art, decoration, and literature. Biedermeier marked an important moment in the development of modern culture, because it marked the bourgeoisie's discovery of interior design. A century earlier, Rococo designers created for aristocrats the first interiors intended as harmonious ensembles of architecture, art, furniture, and decoration. Biedermeier amounted to the "bourgeoisification" of Rococo: Rococo was ornate and pretentious while Biedermeier was simple and modest. The Biedermeier interior, a site radiating discipline, respect, and productive activity, was conceived as an antidote to Rococo glitz and frivolity.

The Biedermeier era brought upholstered furniture into bourgeois homes for the first time (eliminating yet another marker of difference from the aristocracy), and introduced nature, in the form of houseplants. Ironically, as the barrier between genders solidified, the boundary between indoors and outdoors dissipated. The conceptual model for the bourgeois home was the countryside, where domestic activities (spinning, sewing) took place outdoors (in favorable weather) and plants and animals were present in the peasant home. The negative view of nature as dirty, dangerous, and uncivilized transformed into a positive view (see Chapter 5), and suburbanites eagerly imported the beneficial aspects of nature into their homes. In addition to eroding class differences, Biedermeier evoked a pre-industrial harmony many remembered from childhood.

Small-scale paintings harmonizing with a room's décor reflected Biedermeier taste, and their subjects fell into five main categories—portraiture, landscape, cityscape, peasant life, and still life. Interest in domestic intimacy and preference for smaller scale images link Biedermeier to the French Troubadour style. More significantly it links Biedermeier to Dutch taste of the seventeenth century, a period that experienced social and economic transformation similar to that occurring in many parts of Europe in the early nineteenth century. In the Dutch Republic two centuries earlier, newly wealthy merchants in cities like Amsterdam preferred paintings of concrete, familiar subjects, executed in a detailed and highly realistic technique that fitted on the walls of their town houses. At the same time, the clean lines, clear colors, spare and ordered compositions, and geometric simplicity often characterizing Biedermeier design had their roots in Neoclassicism. Biedermeier is a good example of how a singular and easily recognizable style developed partly as a synthesis of preexisting ones.

The Biedermeier style emerged primarily in German-governed territories (Berlin, Munich, and Vienna were its strongholds) but it also occurred in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, with Copenhagen and St Petersburg important centers. During the Napoleonic era, an anti-Rococo style of interior design evolved in France—Empire—whose small scale, simplicity, and clean lines anticipated Biedermeier, but whose details and materials were more sumptuous, reflecting the taste of the ruling classes under Napoleon. Significantly, almost everywhere except France, a similar range of subjects and styles emerged in the decade after 1815 that reflected bourgeois taste and values. While often offered as the norm for developments in nineteenth-century art, France was in many ways an exceptional case for several

reasons. With revolution occurring on an average of every fifteen years (1815, 1830, 1848, 1851, 1870, 1871), accompanying regime changes created a precarious situation for individuals who could never be quite sure how long new conditions might last. As a result, a stable bourgeois culture did not develop in France in the first half of the nineteenth century as it did elsewhere on the continent (England had a head start in the eighteenth century). In addition, the various French governments, with their shifting thematic and stylistic preferences, continued to provide important patronage for painters, as did the Catholic Church. Construction and decoration of churches accelerated in the nineteenth century due to the population explosion.

The idea of the home as a private haven, whose safe, relaxing, and supportive atmosphere was a psycho-emotional panacea for the stressful, ruthless anonymity of the public sphere, originated in the eighteenth century. At that time, a sharp demarcation between the private and public spheres took place, both within the home and in the home's relationship to the environment. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, bedrooms, even in aristocratic homes, were public spaces where guests were received. Subsequently, upholstered furniture moved from aristocratic bedrooms into the cultural salons of the late eighteenth century. At these regularly held social gatherings often organized by an intelligent, aristocratic woman, prominent and promising politicians, intellectuals, artists, and writers met to freely discuss aesthetic and philosophical issues as well as current events. The bedroom then became a private space, with other, larger rooms of the family residence reserved for public functions. As business, intellectual, and political discussions became the exclusive domain of men, they relocated outside the home to public reading rooms and private clubs, with the result that the public sphere became masculinized and the domestic sphere, feminized.

BIEDERMEIER PORTRAITURE

The bourgeois ideal found its ultimate expression in the happy, healthy, and well appointed home. The Austrian painter Friedrich von Amerling (1803–87) portrayed this idyll in *The Arthäber Family* (1835, Figure 7.5). Amerling studied at the Vienna Academy from 1815 to 1824, then spent two years at the academy in Prague. He worked in London in 1827–28 where he befriended the society portraitist Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830), then returned to his native Vienna, where he became the most sought after portrait painter for two decades. In this nearly life-size portrait (indicative of the sitters' wealth), a doting father sits with his children in a well-appointed room with high ceilings, upholstered furniture, and an oriental rug, whose value is indicated by the fact that it covers the table rather than lying on the floor. Their dress and surroundings reflect the father's prosperity (a sign of diligence and prudence), outward signs that Arthäber (unlike Greuze's *Drunken Cobbler*, Figure 1.5) fulfills his familial duties. Having finished his coffee (a new bourgeois ritual), Rudolf Arthäber attends to his three children, whose personalities and destinies are expressed in their placement and body language: young Rudolf, the family heir, rests his arm on his father's knee with the same casual confidence of his father. Sister Emilie, substituting for the missing maternal presence, stands by her father, indicating that she will soon assume the role of household manager and perhaps remain unmarried in order to care for her father, often the case in motherless families. Baby Gustav smiles affectionately and his father gazes wistfully at an oval frame, containing, conceivably, a portrait of the mother. Her torn hat, nearly identical to Emilie's, is held by Rudolf, along

Figure 7.5

Friedrich von Amerling,
The Arthäber Family, 1835.
Oil on canvas, 221 × 155 cm
(7 ft 3 in × 5 ft 1 in). Belvedere
Museum, Vienna.



with a mysterious rolled paper. The books and tennis racquet suggest that Arthäber looks after both the physical and intellectual health of his children. The mother's absence points to a grim reality of the time—higher rates of female mortality due partly to the sheltered, indoor life women were forced to lead (exercise, meat, and sunlight were considered unhealthy for them) and partly to the high rate of death in childbirth. Despite this unfortunate situation, the mood is one of affection and contentment. The bourgeoisie did not want too aggressive a reminder of the harsh realities infiltrating the domestic sanctum. In light of the recent death of their wife and mother, this portrait provided for the family a pictorial testimony to the triumph of love and understanding over adversity.

The prosperity of men like Arthäber was assisted by the formation of a German Federation in 1815. With more than 2,000 independent states already consolidated by Napoleon into 39, the Federation represented yet another step toward German unification (1870). The Federation standardized trade practices and tariffs, facilitating commerce among German states. Previously, many had their own currencies and charged import duties on merchandise crossing their borders. For goods transported from one end of Europe to the other, this might mean payment of dozens of fees. There was also a psychological impetus for Germans to unite following the humiliating occupation of Napoleonic troops for almost a decade. Prior to this, Germans were acutely aware of regional variations in culture, language, and religion. Following the French invasion, Germans became more attentive to things they had in common.

BIEDERMEIER CITYSCAPES

Cities grew rapidly during the nineteenth century. This caused infrastructural problems (education, housing, law enforcement, sanitation, transportation) that challenged bureaucrats and engineers. Nonetheless, the problematic side of urbanization never appears in Biedermeier painting, only the delightful, fascinating aspects, as in Johann Erdmann Hummel's *The Granite Bowl in the Berlin Lustgarten* (1832, Figure 7.6). Berlin, capital of the Prussian Empire, was the fastest growing European city during the nineteenth century with a population increasing from 172,000 in 1800 to 1.9 million in 1900, including many non-German emigrants from Central Europe. Hummel (1769–1852) specialized in capturing the vitality of Berlin for bourgeois clients. He studied at the art academy in his native Kassel, which funded his trip to Rome from 1892 to 1896. Upon his return, Hummel settled in Berlin, where he became a professor at the academy in 1809.

The Granite Bowl represented one of the most fashionable spots in Berlin—the public garden in front of the royal palace (seen in the background and demolished in 1950), where an 80-ton granite bowl (still in place) was installed in the 1830s. Hummel shows how it looked before completion, which took six years. Berlin's citizens considered it an expensive (38,000 thaler, about \$465,000) and impressive feat of engineering—the granite came from Sweden on a sled over the winter ice. Hummel shows Berliners of all ages, but not all classes, admiring the bowl with its uncanny reflections. Here, there are no literary references, no overt messages, no important events—simply a slice of well-ordered everyday life in modern-day Berlin. The scene occurs in the shadow of the twin pillars of church (cathedral) and state (palace), and is observed by gruff old men—like the one on the left, a portrait of Johann Gottlieb Cantian, who supervised the project—and the military. Hummel depicted only middle-class strollers (the children may be Hummel's own)—the sort who might purchase his painting, or join the local art association in order to take a chance on winning it in a lottery.



Figure 7.6

Johann Erdmann Hummel,
*The Granite Bowl in the Berlin
Lustgarten*, 1832. Oil on canvas,
66 × 89 cm (26 × 35 in).
Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

BIEDERMEIER PEASANT PAINTING

Just as nature functioned as an idealized opposite of the city, peasant life was envisioned as a positive antipode to that of urbanites, whether factory workers, civil servants, or businessmen. Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller (1793–1865) evoked this idealized vision in *Peasant Wedding* (1843, Figure 7.7). On a sunny summer day, Austrian villagers in their Sunday best celebrate a young couple's marriage. People converse, eat, dance, and play music; everyone appears happy and healthy. The relaxed atmosphere describes a thriving community based on familiarity, interdependence, and mutual respect. Although despair, disharmony, and misfortune affected peasants as well as urbanites, the latter had a psychological need to imagine country life as problem-free. Paintings like *Peasant Wedding* described a world of harmony and happiness that provided temporary, imaginary refuge for bourgeois collectors. In the serene and unpretentious world of Waldmüller, people are pious, prosperous, and joyous. Waldmüller's sanitized peasant world preserved the traditional values longed for by the urban bourgeoisie.



Figure 7.7
Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller,
Peasant Wedding, 1843.
Oil on canvas, 95 × 111 cm
(3 ft 1½ in × 3 ft 7¾ in).
Belvedere Museum, Vienna.

BIEDERMEIER LANDSCAPE

Rural images occurred frequently in Biedermeier painting for reasons similar to those discussed in connection with the rise of landscape painting (Chapter 5). The countryside was envisaged in dialectical opposition to the city, and urbanites visited nearby rural spots on weekends or in summer to experience the simplicity, innocence, and healthfulness they associated with country living. This idealization of the countryside emerges in *Kneeling Girl with Basket Overflowing with Flowers* (1841, Figure 7.8) painted by Marie Ellenrieder (1791–1863). Her composition—a large, idealized female figure set into a generalized, Italianate landscape—recalls the Madonnas of



Figure 7.8
 Marie Ellenrieder, *Kneeling Girl with Basket Overflowing with Flowers*, 1841.
 Oil on canvas, 70 × 84 cm
 (27½ × 33 in). Staatliche
 Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe.

Raphael. Ellenrieder painted the flowers with meticulous botanical detail, and included uniquely Alpine blossoms such as edelweiss. The girl is not engaged in any kind of meaningful activity—why is she kneeling and pouring flowers out of a basket, and how did she gather so many different types of flowers that neither grow in the same region nor blossom at the same time? This painting was not created to document or educate, but rather to satisfy a client’s desire for aesthetic enjoyment.

Ellenrieder was a maverick: the first woman admitted to Munich’s art academy and the first commissioned to decorate a church. She specialized in portraiture, religious painting, and still lifes, subjects considered appropriate for female painters because they required neither time spent outdoors nor social contacts outside the home, both of which were taboo for women from good families. Following her studies in Munich, Ellenrieder became court painter to Grand Duke Ludwig von Baden, who funded her trip to Rome from 1822 to 1824. There, she met Nazarene painter Friedrich Overbeck (Figure 4.22), whose style and subject matter influenced Ellenrieder’s.

Ellenrieder was a beneficiary of reforms made at the Munich Academy in 1808. Established in 1770, the Munich Academy became Europe’s most progressive following the adoption of the 1806 constitution. (Formulated by the philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, it was influenced by egalitarian French Republican values at a moment when Bavaria was allied with Napoleonic France.) The constitution stipulated that teachers not follow a prescribed curriculum, but give pupils as much freedom as possible to develop their particular talents. The Munich Academy was also the first academy to offer courses on color theory and to encourage studies from nature; all others focused exclusively on drawing after plaster casts of ancient sculpture, or people posed like them. It accepted its first woman, Ellenrieder, in 1813, and in 1817 offered its first scholarship to a woman. By the 1840s, the Munich Academy’s popularity with foreign artists was second only to the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

BIEDERMEIER HISTORY PAINTING

The extent to which bourgeois values dominated in the cultural realm is demonstrated by the production of Biedermeier history paintings. *The Triumphal Entry of Franz I After the Peace of Paris, 16 June 1814*, (1833–37, Figure 7.9) by Johann Peter Krafft (1780–1856) was a hybrid work conforming to the basic requirements of academic history painting but in a Biedermeier format. Rulers had triumphantly entered their capitals since Roman times, when the arches of Constantine, Septimius Severus, and Titus were built. In 1810, Nazarene Franz Pforr recorded the thirteenth-century triumphal entry of Emperor Rudolf into Basel (Figure 4.21), and here Krafft shows the then-current emperor of Austria, Franz I (referred to in Chapter 2 as Franz II, but this is because before 1804 he was Franz II of the Austrian Holy Roman Empire; Napoleon dissolved it and made him Franz I of the reconstituted Austrian Empire). Franz I returned victoriously to Vienna after signing the treaty in Paris returning France to its 1792 borders. Franz I had spent his entire regency (he ascended the throne in 1792) fighting against Napoleon, and his success as a ruler was signaled by this equestrian portrait amidst a jubilant crowd. He enters the city symbolically through a temporary triumphal arch erected at the city's periphery. As in Hummel's *Granite Bowl*, the twin powers of church and state, represented in the background by the Karlskirche on the right and the Belvedere Palace on the left, signal political stability. Indeed, the Hapsburg dynasty had ruled Austria for more than 300 years.

While *Entry of Franz I* commemorated a political victory in a manner appropriate for history painting, its small scale and trivial narrative details typified Biedermeier. On the right, a boy climbs a railing to get a better view; on the left, a mother kneels to explain the event to her young son. People wave, turn to each other in conversation, and girls dressed in the red and white court colors strew flowers in the Emperor's path. All levels of society are present—from the emperor and members of his court to well-dressed bourgeois observers, and even barefoot members of the lower class anxious for their children to witness this historic moment. The subject and composition, as well as its details, reinforce a vision of Austria as a well-ordered, harmonious society ruled by a wise and beloved emperor.

Figure 7.9

Johann Peter Krafft, *The Triumphal Entry of Franz I After the Peace of Paris, 16 June 1814*, 1833–37. Oil on canvas, 39 × 65 cm (15½ × 2½ in). Belvedere Museum, Vienna.



GOLDEN AGE IN DENMARK

Eckersberg, teacher of many Danish Golden Age (Biedermeier) artists, painted an unusual, hybrid character study during his Roman sojourn, *Roman Beggar* (1815, Figure 7.10). The spare setting, near-photographic realism, and dignified sitter evidence Eckersberg's roots in Neoclassicism; the painting's modest size typified Biedermeier, and its impoverished subject anticipated social Realism. Unlike Géricault's portraits of the insane (Figure 4.13), Eckersberg's does not expose the sitter's psychological character; instead, in Biedermeier fashion, it presents with apparent detachment a common, if tidied, aspect of urban life. Still, Eckersberg generated exceptional intensity by isolating the figure in a dramatic light. Like Géricault's *Wounded Cuirassier* (Figure 3.10), Eckersberg's *Beggar* transgressed academic categories—it was neither portrait (the figure is anonymous) nor genre, due to the absence of setting and activity. Eckersberg's focus on a destitute member of the lowest social order anticipated Realist concerns that flourished several decades later.

In *View from the Embankment of Lake Sortendam* (1838, Figure 7.11), Christien Købke (1810–48) depicted a typical scene from his native Copenhagen, a city surrounded by water, from the viewpoint of his own yard. Købke studied with Eckersberg at the Copenhagen Academy for eight years. Like Hummel's *Granite Bowl*, Købke's painting is small in scale, ordinary in subject, and rigidly symmetrical, a circumstance reinforcing its tranquility and order. The image seems frozen; the only hint of movement is the prominently displayed Danish flag fluttering in the breeze of the long, light Danish evening.

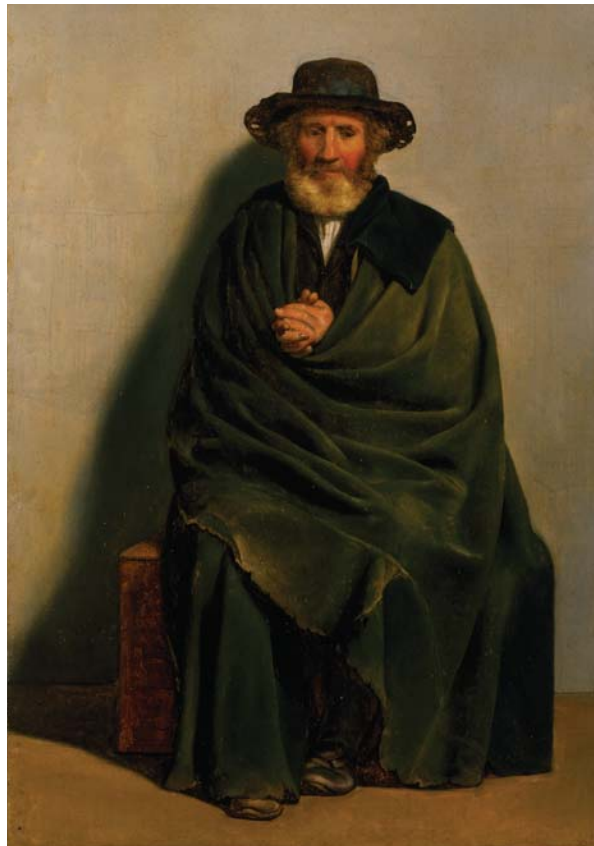


Figure 7.10
Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg,
Roman Beggar, 1815.
Oil on canvas, 29 × 21 cm
(11 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in). Thorvaldsens
Museum, Copenhagen.

Figure 7.11

Christien Købke, *View from the Embankment of Lake Sortendam*, 1838. Oil on canvas, 66 × 89 cm (20⁷/₈ × 28³/₈ in). National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen.



Having lost Norway to Sweden in 1814 and with the German population of the Danish provinces Schleswig and Holstein agitating for independence (after a brief war they joined Prussia in 1865), Denmark's national integrity was under siege. There, as elsewhere, people began formulating national identity based on shared culture, language, and religion, with symbols such as flags and national anthems functioning as patriotic rallying points. Because a Danish national identity independent of the monarchy was perceived as threatening, the government outlawed the flying of flags by private individuals in 1834. This law was not taken too seriously, however, since the king purchased *View from the Embankment* in 1839 for display in the private rooms of the royal palace. The flag bisects the scene, separating the pair of women standing on a dock watching the departure of a boat rowed by men (with two women passengers, one of whom looks back and waves a kerchief) on a Nordic summer evening. This outdoor setting naturalizes the separation of spheres—even the traditional conflict between nature and industry is neutralized. Here, the tiny stream of smoke rising from a factory at the far end of the lake blends into the scene, a harmless component of the modern Danish landscape.

BIEDERMEIER IN RUSSIA

From Zurich to St Petersburg, Biedermeier became the style of preference among Europe's bourgeoisie. Russian artist Aleksei Venetsianov (1780–1847), showed peasants at work in *The Threshing Floor* (Figure 7.12), in an image that, like Waldmüller's, ignored the hardships of rural life. The financially independent son of a successful merchant, Venetsianov was largely self-taught. After 1815, when he inherited an estate northwest of Moscow, he abandoned portrait painting to concentrate on images of rural life. Like Constable (Chapter 5), Venetsianov focused on the agricultural landscape to which he belonged, and manipulated it to create reassuring visions of agrarian serenity and prosperity. Although *Threshing Floor* depicted an actual barn



Figure 7.12
Aleksei Venetsianov,
The Threshing Floor, 1821.
Oil on canvas, 67 × 81 cm
(26¼ × 31¾ in). State Russian
Museum, St Petersburg.

on Venetsianov's estate, and his serfs (peasants who belonged to the land and were bought and sold with it) served as models, the pictorial arrangement is invented.

Venetsianov employed the same selection strategy endorsed by Kauffmann in *Zeuxis Selecting Models for Helen of Troy* (Figure 2.5). In order to create the light and space he needed, Venetsianov had his serfs remove a barn wall, and then arranged each figure, one at a time. It is clear that he painted the barn first, because some middle- and background figures painted later have become transparent ghosts. The peasants' tools—brooms, rakes, and scythes—are as carefully positioned as the costumed peasants in this unrealistically pristine setting. Venetsianov showed his urban audience clean, healthy, orderly, and industrious peasants collaborating in food production, oblivious to gender and social differences, and in harmony with seasonal rhythms. The fiction of such rural harmony became apparent in the 1860s, when Tsar Alexander II liberated Russia's 20 million serfs.

MID-CENTURY AMERICA

Because the United States did not experience a repressive Restoration period limiting public life and focusing attention on home and family, the artistic preferences of the American bourgeoisie differed somewhat from its European contemporaries during the period 1815–48. The main impulse among the American bourgeoisie during this era was to understand its new and rapidly expanding country. People were curious about the New World and the secrets that lay hidden in its vast wilderness. Thus, highly detailed documents of the flora, fauna, geography, and native inhabitants were popular, as were images that reified the American self-image as brave, hardworking, independent, and resourceful. As in Europe, the US population grew at a rapid pace (from 5.3 million in 1800 to 23.2 million in 1850, of which more than 3 million were European immigrants). Cities grew even faster; in 1800 New York had 79,000

Figure 7.13

William Sidney Mount, *Farmers Nooning*, 1836. Oil on canvas, 51 × 62 cm (20¼ × 24½ in). The Long Island Museum of American Art, History & Carriages, Stony Brook, NY



inhabitants, jumping to 700,000 by 1850. In 1800, there were no cities with populations over 100,000, but six by 1850 (Baltimore, Boston, Cincinnati, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia). Because American urbanites experienced the same distress as their European counterparts, they appreciated similar subject matter—uncomplicated and idealized visions of country life.

Just as European landscape and genre painters tended to specialize in particular geographical locations—Waldmüller, Vienna; Købke, Copenhagen; Constable, Suffolk—the same was true in the US. For New Yorkers, Long Island offered a rural idyll that contrasted with their busy lives, and William Sidney Mount (1807–68) was one of its most popular chroniclers. Mount began as a sign painter, but shifted direction after studying at the recently established National Academy of Design in 1826. After an unsuccessful stint painting historical subjects, Mount returned to the farming community of Stony Brook, Long Island and concentrated on rural scenes. Like Constable and Venetsianov, he painted what he knew best. To his public, Mount's subjects seemed quintessentially American, untainted by the decadent European ways spoiling the inhabitants of cities like New York.

Farmers Nooning (1836, Figure 7.13) depicted a break during the late-summer harvest. Besides conveying health, peace, and order, Mount elevated the moral status of his subject by evoking the biblical story of Ruth and Boas. Following the death of her husband and children from famine, Ruth worked as a farmhand for Boas, a wealthy farmer. Boas was impressed by her industry and virtue. She wanted to marry him, but hesitated because he was much older. Ruth consented when she discovered he had loved her from their first meeting. *Farmers Nooning* appealed to collectors like Luman Reed (Thomas Cole's patron), who appreciated rural values of honesty and hard work, and longed for the perceived healthiness and simplicity of country life.

VICTORIAN PAINTING

Just as the ruling class had for centuries documented its achievements and activities in paintings, the bourgeoisie made similar demands on artists to record the values and habits of its world in the nineteenth century. In England, this art is known as Victorian rather than Biedermeier because it coincided with the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901). As we saw in the case of Boilly, Hummel, and Krafft, busy public spaces were hallmarks of modern urban life. By mid-century in Britain, the train station became an emblematic urban space, replacing the market place. In *The Railway Station* (1863, Figure 7.14), William Powell Frith (1819–1909) showed the cavernous halls of London’s Paddington Station, where people crowd together momentarily and anonymously only to disperse toward their various destinations. The crowd was a new urban phenomenon whose dangers were obvious to some. In his short story “The Man of the Crowd” (1840) Edgar Allan Poe recognized that human behavior is best controlled through personal acquaintance. The anonymous individual, on the other hand, “is the type and genius of deep crime. He refuses to be alone. *He is the man of the crowd.*” In this detailed scene of more than 100 figures, Frith portrayed a broad range of London types, from destitute beggars to elegant ladies. Although a child stands in the center foreground, observing with fascination the flurry of activity surrounding him, there is otherwise little sense of order or symmetry. The numerous narrative incidents here evidence the chaos of modern life. Such urban genre subjects were popular in England, convincing Frith to switch from painting literary subjects to contemporary ones. He was paid £5,250 (equivalent to about £255,000 or \$470,000), which enriched both Frith and Louis Flatlow, the man to whom he sold the painting. Flatlow arranged a successful solo exhibition of the painting, at which he marketed engravings of it to an eager public. Although Frith had little formal training (studying privately at the Henry Sass Academy and for less than a year at the RA), he quickly joined the establishment, exhibiting at the RA in 1840 and becoming a member five years later.



Figure 7.14
William Powell Frith,
The Railway Station, 1863.
Oil on canvas, 42 × 91 cm
(16½ × 36 in). New Walk
Museum and Art Gallery,
Leicester.

PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD

The RA focused more on theory than on practice and many young artists viewed it as a bastion of outmoded ideas that maintained power through deception—deception in asserting a hierarchy of subjects, deception in ignoring social realities, and deception in creating illusions. A small group of disgruntled RA students formed a secret society that made its debut at the RA exhibition of 1849. Although they disagreed with the

RA's curriculum, they had no reservations about taking advantage of the exhibition opportunities it presented. Paintings by William Holman Hunt (1827–1910), John Everett Millais (1829–96), and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82) were inscribed with the mysterious monogram PRB. Its meaning generated great speculation (“Please Ring Bell?” “Preferably Rich Buyers?”) until the *Illustrated London News* revealed it as Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB) on 4 May 1850. With the goal of spreading its reformatory ideas, the PRB published the short-lived (four-issue) journal *The Germ*, which stated its purpose: to express heartfelt ideas through a careful study of nature and to admire passionate and innovative artworks from earlier times. For the PRB (as for the Nazarenes), these goals conflicted with the artifice and convention encouraged by the Academy. Instead of concurring with the RA's admiration for Renaissance art achieved in the nineteenth century through slavish imitation, the PRB admired works they claimed were free from convention and motivated by inner passion. The PRB condemned rigid academic training, which took place almost entirely indoors and stressed fidelity to established patterns rather than encouraging personal inspiration.

The example of the Nazarenes inspired the formation of the PRB. Their colleague William Dyce (1806–64) told them about this earlier secession of reform-minded art students, whose work Dyce had encountered during his Roman sojourn (1825–28). Dyce painted frescoes in the recently rebuilt Houses of Parliament (the old ones perished in an 1834 fire) and was impressed by the Nazarenes' monumental projects; he visited Schnorr von Carolsfeld during an 1837 visit to Munich. Like the Nazarenes, Dyce was religious and believed in the power of art to change the viewer's outlook. As a result, he collaborated with the German-born Prince Albert in devising a program of frescoes for the new Houses of Parliament. Dyce settled on scenes from Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (The Death of Arthur, c. 1450), then gaining popularity as the British national legend since the publication of Alfred Tennyson's 1845 poem with the same title.

For the Queen's Robing Room (where Victoria dressed in ceremonial robes to address the House of Lords), Dyce painted several images, including *Religion: the Vision of Sir Galahad and His Company* (1851, Figure 7.15). To Dyce, Arthur exemplified virtue comparable to that furnished earlier by classical figures like Brutus, Achilles, and the Horatii brothers. Dyce's image was inspired by several scenes from Malory's tale that the artist conflated into an original creation. Here, the chaste Sir Galahad and his two companions from the Round Table, Bors and Percival, experience a collective vision of Christ and the Four Evangelists following a church service heard in a hermitage deep in the forest. The idea of piety and virtue leading to good deeds, miracles, and divine revelation seemed a suitable subject for Britain's queen.

The composition of Galahad's vision was inspired by either Raphael or Overbeck. In 1847, Prince Albert gave Queen Victoria a drawing of Overbeck's *Triumph of Religion in the Arts* (Städel Art Institute, Frankfurt), which in turn was based on Raphael's *Disputa* (1509), which Dyce would have seen in Rome, as well as in Raphael's cartoon (finished drawing) for it is in the royal collection at Hampton Court. Dyce's fresco evidences qualities inspirational to the PRB: highly detailed, fully three-dimensional figures, a lucid, theatrical composition with the minimum number of necessary participants, a fascination with historical detail, and a moment of high drama. Gauguin later utilized the device of a collective vision in order to communicate similar ideas of piety and virtue (Figure 13.18).

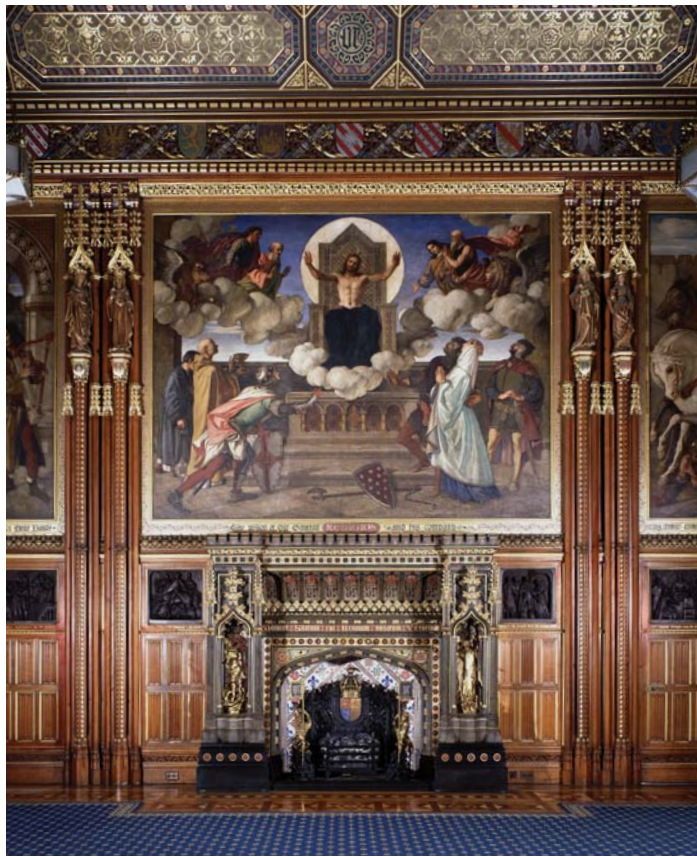


Figure 7.15
William Dyce, *Religion: the Vision of Sir Galahad and His Company*, 1851. Fresco. Palace of Westminster, London.

While Dyce admired Raphael, as had the Nazarenes, the PRB took as its model Italian Renaissance art prior to Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo—in other words, fifteenth-century art, particularly that of artists like Botticelli, whose works exuded the innocence and piety they admired. The PRB exerted a major force on Victorian art. Working for an affluent and devoted circle of patrons, PRB artists exhibited regularly at the RA. Their independent principles attracted younger artists into their circle, including William Morris (1834–96), leader of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Pre-Raphaelite paintings differed from academic ones in subject matter and technique. Although many PRB paintings depicted historical and literary subjects, PRB artists infused them with personal meaning. Their paintings frequently conveyed messages directly related to current events or their private lives and personal convictions. Unlike formula-following academic artists, PRB artists claimed to paint accurately what they saw before them, disregarding effects of light, atmosphere, and imperfect vision. In contrast to their contemporary Turner, who wanted to communicate the feeling of a moment, the PRB concentrated on the flawless rendition of surface appearances, an enterprise they felt was more honest.

Hunt addressed contemporary morals in *The Hireling Shepherd* (1851, Figure 7.16), a multi-layered social critique in the guise of a peasant genre painting. Virtually every detail conveyed meaning to perceptive contemporary viewers. On a sunny summer day in the English countryside, a shepherd neglects his flock, an obvious condemnation of parish priests who seemed more concerned with themselves than the well-being of their parishioners. The shepherd is an employee, a “hireling,” easily

Figure 7.16

William Holman Hunt,
The Hireling Shepherd, 1851.
Oil on canvas, 76 × 110 cm
(30 × 43 in). Manchester Art
Gallery.



distracted from his duties when unsupervised by his employer. This situation was a major worry of British businessmen in an era when industrial expansion required the hiring of workers to whom they had no personal connection. Employers feared this meant a weakened sense of responsibility, since workers were concerned solely with wages, not integrity. This fear of irresponsibility was exacerbated by the keg hanging from the shepherd's belt, which contemporary viewers would understand contained an alcoholic beverage, thus drawing attention to the widespread alcoholism among Britain's working class. Alcohol was an escape from the drudgery of daily life and many employers encouraged it by paying workers at least partly with alcohol. Although the British Association for the Promotion of Temperance formed in 1835, alcoholism persisted as a serious social issue throughout the century. In *How the Poor Live*, George Sims described the continuing problem:

The gin-palace is heaven to them compared to the hell of their pestilent homes. A copper or two, often obtained by pawning the last rag that covers the shivering children on the bare floor at home, will buy enough alcohol to send a woman so besotted that the wretchedness, the anguish, the degradation that await her there have lost their grip. The drink dulls every sense of shame, take the sharp edge from sorrow, and leaves the drinker for awhile in a fools' paradise.

(Sims 1883:15)

Contemporary (urban, middle-class) viewers disapproved of *Hireling Shepherd* because it conflicted with their idealized vision of rural life. *The Times* critic protested: "Shepherds and shepherdesses with such fierce complexions, such wiry hair, and such elephantine feet were not born in Arcadia ..." (Anonymous 1851: 8). Indeed, British urbanites idealized the countryside as a place of harmony, honesty, peace, simplicity, and stability, in other words, a total contrast to life in the city. Hunt's implication that rural realities were not so different from urban ones challenged a fundamental

premise that understandably disturbed his public. The countryside continued to play a crucial psychological role throughout the nineteenth century.

In *The Awakening Conscience* (1853, Figure 7.17), Hunt addressed an issue of escalating concern to Britain's bourgeoisie: prostitution. Extramarital sex on the part of men reached epidemic proportions during the nineteenth century because of changing attitudes toward wives. With wives, procreation was the only legitimate purpose of the sex act, which should occur as quickly as possible so as not to overexcite them and risk mental breakdown. For recreational purposes, men went elsewhere—either to a mistress or a brothel. Women displaced from their native villages due to land reforms and increased population, migrated to cities, where law and custom limited their career options and their salaries (wages for female laborers were half those of men). Prostitution provided one of the few opportunities for women to supplement their meager incomes, one exercised even by desperate wives and mothers.

The Awakening Conscience was a modern moral tale, whose story would have been clear to contemporaries visiting the RA exhibition of 1854. A young, beautiful mistress, clad only in her dressing gown and with her hair free—a sign of casualness reserved for domestic intimacy—rises from the lap of her keeper, inspired by an epiphany induced by the sunlit nature outside the window. That epiphany is the error of her promiscuity—this woman has literally seen the light. As in Hogarth's *The Tête à Tête* (Figure 1.3), the artist provides clues to the painting's meaning. Clearly unmarried (she wears no wedding ring), the woman has been seduced by materialism; everything



Figure 7.17
William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853.
Oil on canvas, 76 × 56 cm
(30 × 22 in). Tate, London.

in this room is new and expensive. The unraveled yarn on the floor by the piano indicates the disheveled state of her life, and the discarded glove suggests that her lover will one day carelessly abandon her in a similar way. A bird has just escaped the clutches of the cat lurking beneath the table, suggesting that this woman may also escape her deplorable plight.

Millais's *Ophelia* (1851–52, Figure 7.18) lies at the crossroads of tradition and modernity. It combines a subject from a time-honored source for history painting—William Shakespeare—with a Romantic withdrawal from the everyday world into the realm of the imagination. Millais shows Ophelia at the end of her young and tragic life, when she falls into a brook and drowns. Hamlet's mother describes Ophelia's final moments:

*Her clothes spread wide,
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up;
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress ...
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.*

(Hamlet, Act 4, Scene 7)

Ophelia's father, Polonius, advisor to Claudius, King of Denmark, forbade her from seeing Claudius's son, Prince Hamlet. To make matters worse, Hamlet mistakenly kills her father, Polonius, thinking he was King Claudius, murderer of Hamlet's father. Ophelia, having lost her father and her boyfriend, took refuge from the violent and cruel world around her in the safe haven of her own imagination.

Ophelia addressed the conflicted attitudes of men toward woman in Victorian England. Required by law to obey first father then husband, intelligent bourgeois women were frustrated and bored by a life of forced leisure and submission. Those who, like Ophelia, were driven literally crazy by legal and social constraints, found

Figure 7.18
John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*,
1851–52. Oil on canvas,
76 × 112 cm (30 × 44 in).
Tate, London.



themselves committed to insane asylums, which reinforced misconceptions about the mental instability of women. Other bourgeois women channeled their energies into acceptable occupations outside the home, particularly charity work, since a family's social status was diminished if the wife or daughters worked for wages. *Ophelia* alluded to a sad truth of the time: suicide by drowning was the most frequently chosen method of suicide for women in the nineteenth century (Chapter 9). Ophelia imagery and female suicide were so closely linked in the Victorian imagination that insane asylum supervisors photographed women dressed up in Ophelia costumes in order to obtain “authentic” pictures of potential Ophelias, and stage directors sent Shakespearean actresses to asylums in order to study Ophelia behavior at first hand.

Millais upheld the Pre-Raphaelite principle of truthful representation by painting the setting outdoors by a riverside in Surrey. Elizabeth Siddal (1829–62) modeled for Ophelia by floating for the better part of three weeks fully clothed in a bathtub, whose water was warmed by lamps. Although figure and setting were painted separately, and the entire scene is a product of the artist's imagination, Pre-Raphaelite painters considered this procedure more truthful than assembling sketches made out-of-doors for a composition designed and executed indoors. Earlier, Turner strove to create truthful paintings by accurately conveying to viewers his visual and emotional experience at a particular moment in time. Ideas about what constituted truth in painting varied greatly during the nineteenth century.

Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* (c. 1864–70, Figure 7.19) is important because it anticipated by decades aspects of Symbolism (Chapter 13). Its focus on interiority

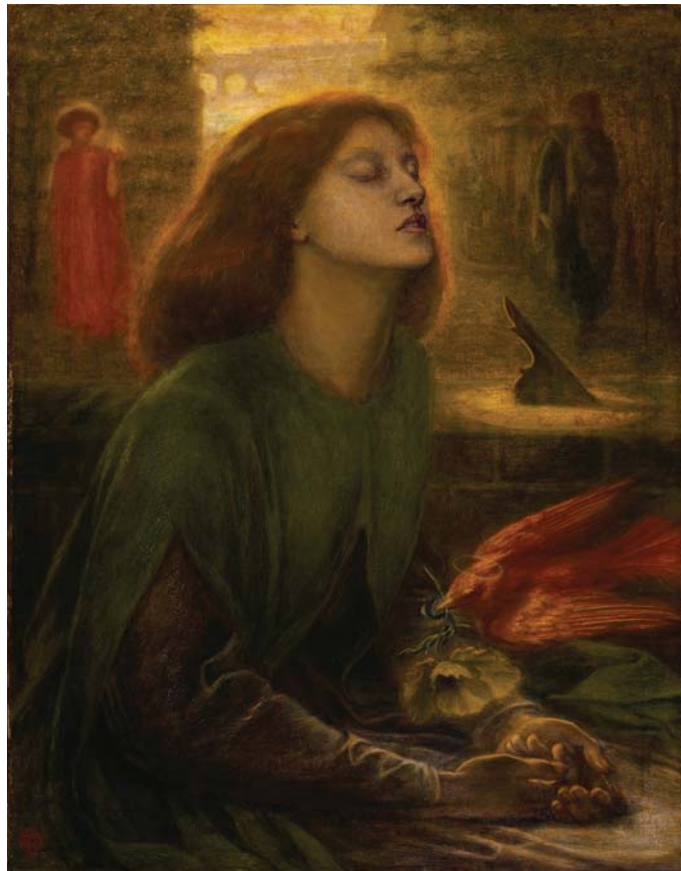


Figure 7.19
Dante Gabriel Rossetti,
Beata Beatrix, c. 1864–70.
Oil on canvas, 86 × 66 cm
(34 × 26 in). Tate, London.

via closed eyes, on the transitional state between life and death, its disguised autobiographical content, and its evocation of memories all emerged as typical elements of Symbolist art in the 1880s. In a potent conflation of past and present, Rossetti painted *Beata Beatrix* as a memorial to his wife, Elizabeth Siddal, who suffered from tuberculosis and died of a drug (laudanum) overdose. According to the artist, the image “is not at all intended to *represent* Death ... but to render it under the resemblance of a trance ...” (Rossetti 1889: 56). Rossetti imagined her as Beatrice, the mysterious, but real, woman who inspired Dante to write a collection of poems, *The New Life* (*La Vita Nuova*), whose subject was salvation through chaste love. In *Beata Beatrix*, Rossetti depicted his own inspirational muse, whose closed eyes signified her focus on the world within (imagination) and the world beyond (spirit), perhaps at the moment of death, when these mysterious realms merge.

MUNICIPAL ART ASSOCIATIONS

As the patronage pattern shifted from the state and aristocracy to the bourgeoisie, interest in art broadened. With social prestige increasingly attached to wealth rather than birth, the possibility opened for commoners to at least dream about fame, fortune, and status. Social climbing became a realistic possibility, and all ranks of society began to imitate bourgeois taste, which established new norms. The popularization of bourgeois taste reinforced that group’s dominant social position. The lower classes could imitate the trappings of bourgeois life in hope of eventually joining the bourgeoisie. Since art ownership denoted wealth, acquiring works of art offered a tangible way of demonstrating one’s status and social allegiance. To facilitate this among the middle and working classes, non-profit municipal art associations (*Kunstvereine*) emerged after 1815 in cities large and small, first in Germany, then elsewhere. These were community organizations established by enlightened progressives who wanted to bring an appreciation of art and culture to a broader audience. It constituted a democratizing impulse, since cultural literacy implied social power and status. For the price of a modest annual subscription, members usually received a free, original print, and participated in the annual lottery, with lucky entrants winning an original painting by a local artist. The first art association was established in Hamburg in 1822, a city with a long democratic tradition and strong sense of civic responsibility among its bourgeoisie. Hamburg’s art association included lawyers, merchants, architects, artists, army officers, publishers, doctors, art dealers, engineers, university professors, diplomats, and, conveniently, a pastry chef. By 1848, it had 467 members, including 30 women. With surplus funds accumulated from lotteries, auctions, and print sales, the association began to purchase art in 1836, beginning with Runge’s *Hülsenbeck Children* (Figure 4.5). In 1850, its permanent collection opened as the City Gallery, the predecessor of the Hamburg Kunsthalle (founded in 1868), whose first one-person exhibition (of Nazarene painter Peter Cornelius) attracted 30,000 visitors.

The London Art Union established in 1837, the year Victoria became queen, patronized artists operating outside the RA. The House of Commons founded it to encourage art education and patronage among Britain’s middle classes, with the explicit nationalistic goal of securing international cultural and economic dominance. Beginning in the 1840s, the Art Union held an annual exhibition of member purchases, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors. Frith and Turner were among those artists contributing designs for the annually issued members’ print.

The American Art-Union was established in 1842 by artists to promote sales. Membership grew from 700 in 1842 to 19,000 in 1849. The Art-Union also purchased artworks with membership dues, and all members received annually an engraving based on one of its paintings. The Art-Union issued a members' journal and purchased about 25 paintings each year—its 1845 purchase was George Caleb Bingham's *Fur Traders* (Figure 5.20) and in 1843 the members' engraving was Mount's *Farmers Noonning*. In 1848, a half million visitors came to the Art-Union's memorial exhibition following Cole's death, and its membership doubled following the announcement that Cole's *Voyage of Life* series would be that year's lottery prize.

CONCLUSION

The steadily increasing size, wealth, and education of the middle classes generated a demand for art—to view and to purchase. In response, art dealers and gallery spaces proliferated in major cities. In London, art dealers Ernest Gambart and Louis Flatow marketed art to an eager public, and in Paris, Goupil, Durand-Ruel (dealer for Barbizon painters and Manet), and Georges Petit (dealer for Monet and Renoir) sold paintings to clients from France and abroad. Smaller cities like Madrid and Stockholm could not support such enterprises until later in the century because there was a direct relationship between industrialization and the growth of a private art market. While dealers were selective in whom they represented and exhibited in their galleries, the breadth of choice expanded significantly the predictable offerings at official venues like the Royal Academy and the Salon. Interest in art corresponded to the expansion of print media, and the number of cultural journals increased steadily throughout the century.

Between the discrediting of aristocracy, monarchy, and state churches as capable, trustworthy, and wise rulers and their simultaneous impoverishment due to wars and a changing economy, a power vacuum occurred that was quickly filled by the bourgeoisie and the middle classes, whose prosperity and concomitant desire for a political voice determined the course of the nineteenth century. The period between 1815 and 1848 experienced momentous transformations due to industrialization, migration, and urbanization. Artists were fascinated by this state of perpetual newness, which furnished an exciting new range of subjects that appealed to the middle-class public. Individuals frightened rather than exhilarated by the new world order could take refuge in a carefully created domestic environment, in memories of their childhood, or in nostalgic fantasies of an idealized past. A yearning to at least mentally escape from then-current conditions was exacerbated by the desperate and doomed struggle of traditional power elites to maintain control. The resulting restrictions on personal freedom led many to create safe havens, imaginary or real, and the tenuous grasp held by feudal elites disintegrated in the wake of the 1848 revolutions.

For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter, along with a modern view of the granite bowl painted by Hummel, go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.



Photography as Fact and Fine Art

Camera obscura

Literally, “dark room.” A box with a small hole on one side through which light (and an image) passes. The image is reflected by a mirror onto a drawing surface. Camera obscuras have been used since ancient times.

Camera lucida

Literally, “light room.” A portable aid for copying consisting of a prism mounted above a drawing board that reflects a scene onto it. It was patented by William Hyde Wollaston in 1807.

Photography, defined alternatively as documentary and as an art form, emerged at the crossroads of art, science, and technology. It developed from a desire for a precise copy of the natural world, a desire that emerged during the Renaissance, when attention shifted from spiritual to natural phenomena. The **camera obscura** (“dark room”), invented in ancient times and revived in the sixteenth century, provided an initial solution by projecting views upside down onto an interior wall via a small hole. Artists could trace the contours of objects, turn their canvas right side up, and finish their work. Over the next two centuries, artists and opticians made steady improvements on the camera obscura, installing lenses to sharpen the image and mirrors to correct the inversion. Panini (Figure 1.10) relied on the camera obscura for accurate, proportional, and perspectively correct views, as did Josiah Wedgwood, when Catherine the Great of Russia commissioned a table service showing British manor houses. During the eighteenth century, the **camera lucida** was invented, a portable apparatus that reflected views onto small surfaces. Artists used it, as did Grand Tourists eager to record their travels accurately.

“INVENTION” OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Optics and chemistry were the main ingredients of photography. Essential was a light-sensitive substance and a material that arrested the effect of light on the sensitized surface. In 1725, Doctor Johann Heinrich Schultze accidentally discovered that silver nitrate darkened when exposed to sunlight. Still it was not until 1826 that chemist Joseph Nicéphore Niépce (1765–1833) first “fixed” an image—on a pewter plate—placed in a small camera obscura after an exposure of eight hours (Figure 8.1). Niépce coated the plate with bitumen (a component of asphalt used by Géricault in *Raft of the Medusa*), which he discovered became insoluble when exposed to light. Ten years later, chemist John Herschel discovered that hypo (sodium thiosulfate) rinsed away unexposed silver nitrate, thus arresting the darkening process and producing a permanent image. Finally, the essential ingredients for photography were assembled.

The official birth of photography occurred in 1839, when two photographic processes were officially unveiled. In France, the daguerreotype process, named after its inventor Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (1787–1851), produced a unique, laterally



Figure 8.1
Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, *View from the Window at Le Gras*, 1826. The University of Texas at Austin.



Figure 8.2
Théodore Maurisset, *Daguerrotypy Mania*, 1840.

reversed, monochromatic image on a metal plate. Daguerre worked with Niépce beginning in 1829 to develop a light-sensitive metal plate coating. When Niépce died, Daguerre continued their work, omitting all mention of his partner when presenting to the public the process they developed together (Figure 8.2).

Calotype

Literally, “beautiful print.” One of the first photographic processes. It produces images on paper sensitized with silver nitrate and potassium iodide. Prior to exposure to light, the paper is treated with gallo-nitrate of silver, and afterwards the image is fixed with hypo. Shapes blocking the light remain light; the surrounding areas turn dark. William Henry Fox Talbot invented the process in 1839.

In England, Henry Fox Talbot (1800–77) invented the **calotype**, a monochromatic as well as laterally and tonally reversed image on paper—a negative. This could be printed onto another chemically treated surface to produce a positive image. In 1835, Fox Talbot made the first photographic negative (Figure 8.3). The exposure took ten minutes, and was made by inserting silver nitrate sensitized paper into a small camera, exposing it to light, and “fixing” the image by immersing it in a bath with potassium iodine, or table salt, functional but less effective than hypo. The main disadvantage of the daguerreotype was its uniqueness—it could not be reproduced. However its sharpness of resolution was far superior to the calotype, whose fuzzy images could be infinitely reproduced and were considered more “artistic” by some. The daguerreotype (sometimes enhanced with color painted on) was also fragile—the image could easily be scratched or rubbed away.

Determined to combine the advantages of both, inventors made numerous improvements—latent negative images that became visible after a silver nitrate bath, reduced exposure time, wax paper negatives with higher resolution than calotypes (1851, Gustave Le Gray), and portability through the use of glass negatives (1851, Frederick Scott Archer). Archer, a British sculptor, discovered that collodion (a guncotton derivative)—exposed when wet and developed immediately afterward—shortened

“Everyone is acquainted with the beautiful effects which are produced by a *camera obscura* and has admired the vivid picture of external nature which it displays. It had often occurred to me, that if it were possible to retain upon the paper the lovely scene which thus illuminates it for a moment, or if we could but fix the outline of it, the lights and shadows, divested of all *color*, such a result could not fail to be most interesting. And however much I might be disposed at first to treat this notion as a scientific dream, yet when I had succeeded in fixing the images of the solar microscope by means of a peculiarly sensitive paper, there appeared no longer any doubt that an analogous process would succeed in copying the objects of external nature, although indeed they are much less illuminated.

Not having with me in the country a *camera obscura* of any considerable size, I constructed one out of a large box, the image being thrown upon one end of it by a good object glass fixed in the opposite end. This apparatus being armed with a sensitive paper, was taken out in a summer afternoon and placed about one hundred yards from a building favorably illuminated by the sun. An hour or two afterwards I opened the box, and I found depicted upon the paper a very distinct representation of the building, with the exception of those parts of it which lay in the shade. A little experience in this branch of the art showed me that with smaller *camerae obscurae* the effect would be produced in a smaller time. Accordingly I had several small boxes made, in which I fixed lenses of shorter focus, and with these I obtained very perfect but extremely small pictures; such as without great stretch of imagination might be supposed to be the work of some Lilliputian artist. They require indeed examination with a lens to discover all their minutiae.

In the summer of 1835 I made in this way a great number of representations of my house in the country, which is well suited to the purpose, from its ancient and remarkable architecture. And this building I believe to be the first that was ever yet known to *have drawn its own picture*.”

Source: William Henry Fox Talbot, “Some Account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing, or, The Process by Which Natural Objects May Be Made to Delineate Themselves Without the Aid of the Artist’s Pencil,” *The London and Edinburgh Philosophical Magazine and Journal of Science*, vol. XIV (March 1839) in Charles Harrison, Paul Wood with Jason Gaiger, eds, *Art in Theory, 1815–1900*, London: Blackwell Publishers, 1998, p. 253.

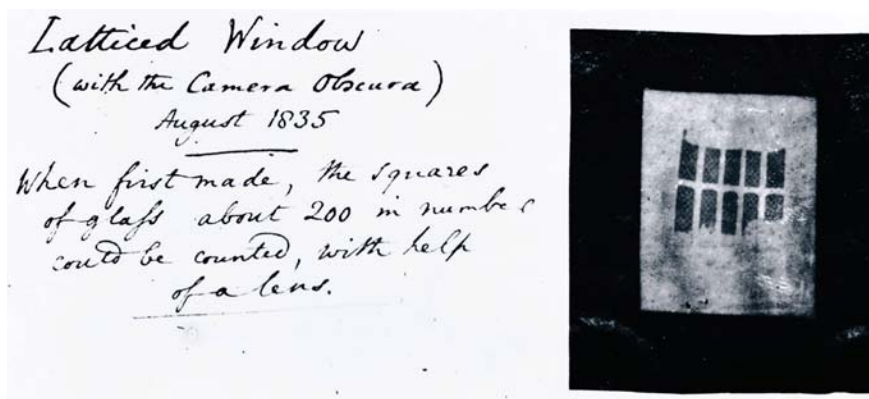


Figure 8.3

William Henry Fox Talbot,
Latticed Window in Lacock Abbey, August 1835. National
Media Museum, Bradford, UK.

exposure time. He applied this to glass, thus solving the problem of fuzzy images, but creating the problem of weight and fragility. Despite the inconvenience of on-the-spot processing, the wet collodion process became the preferred photographic process for almost three decades. Also in 1851, Blanquart-Evrard, a paper manufacturer, began marketing albumen (egg white) treated paper, whose sealed surface produced a glossy, high-resolution image. Concurrent with these improvements in processes, strides were made in improving the quality of lenses and camera bodies, with the result that a photographic industry emerged to serve a growing market.

The next challenges were to discover a more convenient dry plate negative process and more easily produced smooth paper. The realization that dry gelatin bromide could substitute for collodion enabled commercial production of dry plates by 1878, thereby eliminating cumbersome sensitizing and developing equipment. The skills required for plate preparation were now obsolete. In 1888, the Eastman Company of Rochester, New York marketed the Kodak camera, a wooden box camera loaded with Eastman's patented paper negatives coated with a gelatino-bromide emulsion. After taking one hundred pictures, one returned the camera to Eastman and got back negatives, prints, and the camera loaded with a new roll of film, all for ten dollars. In 1889, Eastman began producing transparent, celluloid roll film, introducing the process used until the emergence of Polaroid and digital cameras.

DOCUMENTING CURRENT EVENTS

From the outset, people argued about whether photography was a fine art or a documentary tool. Because the first photographers were amateur inventors usually with backgrounds in science rather than academy-trained artists, many considered photography science rather than art. Photography's dependence on technology encouraged the misconception that it did not require the kind of skill or judgment demanded by drawing, painting, or sculpture. Actually, photography was a complicated, multi-step process with many variables under the photographer's control—composition and application of chemical solutions, timing of exposure, lighting (natural and artificial), developing, printing, choice of camera, not to mention the choice of viewpoint and arrangement of subject.

Because of photography's ability to capture much information in a short time, it was ideal for documentation. Initially, long exposure time meant that stationary objects were the best subjects. In 1838, when Daguerre recorded the view from

his Paris window (Figure 8.4), daguerreotype exposure time was between several minutes and one hour; this image took about 20 minutes. The only human visible is the stationary man resting his foot on the corner water pump. Objects in motion—horses, wagons, people—did not register clearly, giving early city views a ghost town appearance. In 1840, Jozsef Petzval developed a lens admitting 20 times more light than those in then-current use, significantly shortening exposure times.

People soon recognized the value of detailed architectural records in this era of change. Not only did buildings deteriorate faster due to pollution, but hygienic considerations and demographic transformation resulted in the demolition of city walls and maze-like medieval neighborhoods. At the same time, buildings were recognized as markers of local and national identity, resulting in initiatives to preserve and restore key monuments. France's Commission of Historical Monuments was the first government agency to harness photography for this purpose. In 1851, it hired five photographers—including Le Gray—to document decaying national monuments, especially cathedrals, bridges, and castles. A decade later, the French government hired Charles Marville to photograph Paris neighborhoods slated for demolition under the urban renewal project supervised by Baron Haussmann (Figure 8.5). Here, Marville showed a no longer existent intersection, whose masonry walls had housed Parisian life for centuries. "Puits Certains" translates literally as "reliable well," but was the name of a restaurant that assured customers of liquid refreshment. While documentation is an important function of photography, did its capacity to preserve appearances make it easier to justify demolition?

The Crimean War (1854–56)—launched by France and England to prevent Russian incursions into the weakening Ottoman Empire—was the first war documented in photographs. Three-quarters of a million people died in the Crimean War—80 percent from disease—the largest number of wartime casualties between the fall of Napoleon and World War I. Queen Victoria sent Roger Fenton (1819–69)

Figure 8.4

Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre,
Boulevard du Temple, Paris,
c. 1838. Daguerreotype.
Bayerisches Nationalmuseum,
Munich.





Figure 8.5
Charles Marville, *The Intersection of "Puits Certains" in Paris (5th arrondissement)*, 1865–69. Photograph.

to Sebastopol, Ukraine in 1855 to obtain photographic evidence that would contradict stories in the *London Times* alleging military inefficiency and mismanagement. With a cumbersome, horse-drawn wagon containing 700 glass plates, a fully equipped darkroom, five cameras, and two assistants, Fenton worked in the dusty summer heat to record British camp life and the aftermath of battles. One of Fenton's most poignant images was *The Valley of the Shadow of Death, Crimean War* (Figure 8.6). Its title taken from the 23rd Psalm: "though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for Thou art with me," Fenton's image presents a post-apocalyptic vision seemingly devoid of divine presence. Silence, stillness, and emptiness contrast with



Figure 8.6
Roger Fenton, *The Valley of the Shadow of Death, Crimean War*, 1855–56. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

the pandemonium and violence to which it bears witness. A horizontal format and winding path are the only evocations of the classical landscape formula in this war-ravaged panorama. The geometric perfection of cannonballs mingle with irregular rock contours, leaving viewers to question technology's capacity to improve human life. Because it took longer to create a good image of land than of sky in the 1850s, Fenton's sky is overexposed to the point of blankness. A purist committed to photographic truth, Fenton refused to use multiple negatives to print an image, a compromise which would have enabled him—like his teacher Le Gray—to include a realistic, or suitably dramatic, sky.

When Fenton studied painting in Paris with the academic artist Paul Delaroche in 1841, he met fellow pupil Gustave Le Gray (1822–82). Fenton studied with Delaroche until his studio closed in 1843, at which point Fenton returned to London to study law as preparation for a career in his family's banking and textile businesses. He disliked commerce, and instead exhibited paintings at the Royal Academy. In 1847, Fenton helped establish the Photographic Club of London. In 1853, the organization's name changed to The Photographic Society of London (later the Royal Photographic Society), and it, like the art associations it was modeled on, published a journal and opened a library and exhibition space. Fenton lobbied for the acceptance of photography as fine art, an unrealistic aspiration when photography was relegated to the industrial section of the 1862 International Exhibition in London. Discouraged, Fenton abandoned photography for law.

The first extensively documented war was the American Civil War (1861–65), which began over disagreement about whether slavery was an issue of state or national jurisdiction. When southern states seceded in February 1861 to form the Confederate States of America, war broke out. Mathew Brady seized the opportunity to utilize photography as a journalistic tool. The son of immigrant Irish farmers, Brady probably learned daguerreotyping from Samuel Morse (artist and inventor of Morse Code). In 1844, Brady opened a portrait studio in New York that was so profitable he opened a branch in Washington. Brady's portraits, gathered into a "pantheon" of political and cultural leaders, received critical acclaim at the 1851 Crystal Palace exhibition in London, and his wealth enabled him to finance the Civil War project. Brady trained a corps of 20 photographers—many of whom became documenters of the American West—and assigned them to various army units, keeping them supplied with material and equipment. Brady's photographers produced more than 7,000 images, purchased by newspapers such as *Harper's Weekly* and *The New York Times*, which then commissioned artists to produce publishable engravings. This was the first time ordinary citizens received up-to-date information about war, and newspaper illustrations were powerful tools in influencing public opinion. Brady expected to make a fortune from sales of his photographic collection *Incidents of the War* and from the sale of photographs to the government and public, but he misjudged. Instead, Brady sank into poverty, saddled with debt for supplies and salaries. Ultimately, the US government purchased more than 5,000 negatives for the cost of storage fees in 1871. Although Brady made no profit from the Civil War venture, it helped train a generation of photographers.

One of the most evocative Civil War photographs is Alexander Gardner's *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter* (1863, Figure 8.7). Originally part of Brady's team, Gardner (1821–82) quit in 1863 over a dispute about Brady's refusal to grant photographers their own credit line. Gardner helped form a competing firm that

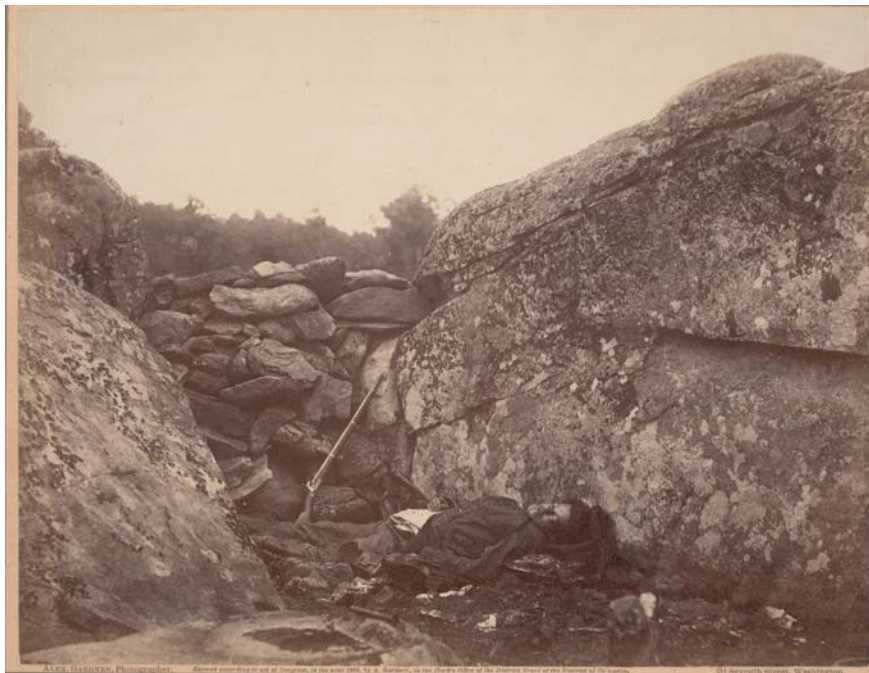


Figure 8.7

Alexander Gardner, *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter*, 1863. Albumen silver print, 18 × 23 cm (7 × 9 in). Museum of Modern Art, New York.

credited images to individual photographers. Here, a Confederate soldier lies dead in a trench alone, except for the bayoneted rifle by his side. As in Fenton's *Valley of the Shadow of Death*, Gardner captured the aftermath of battle, when an eerie silence and stillness encourages reflection about the meaning of life and death. This anonymous individual functions as a symbol for the brothers, fathers, and sons who perished in battle under hideous conditions loved ones dared not envision.

The authority of such Civil War images rested on the assumption that they were unaltered records of fact. People accepted documentary photographs as substitutes for reality. This image, however, is an important example of how photographs can deceive viewers into believing they are seeing truth, when they are actually looking at an arranged composition. According to Gardner's diary, he and his assistants found and set up objects in the image to correspond to Gardner's vision of a compelling and emblematic scene of war: the corpse was dragged and arranged, the rifle taken from elsewhere and purposefully placed. This knowledge transforms the photograph from a faithful witness to a constructed, if poignant, narrative.

SOCIAL REFORM

Nonetheless, most people believed in the truth of documentary photographs; they transmitted news of distant events and recorded neglected aspects of the viewer's own environment. Jacob Riis (1849–1914) pioneered the camera's use for social reform. A Danish emigrant who came to New York in 1870, Riis abandoned his carpentry career in 1877 when the *New York Tribune* hired him as a police reporter. Irked by the misconception that the poor were victims of their own laziness or incompetence, Riis began using a camera to portray destitute immigrants as fellow human beings victimized by circumstances beyond their control. Immigrants often arrived in America naïve and optimistic, believing they had arrived in the land of

opportunity. However, unable to speak English, ill-equipped to obtain work in port cities (most immigrants were farmers), and easy prey to swindlers, immigrants instead found themselves objects of discrimination, disdain, and suspicion. Riis's photographs demonstrated the connection between poverty and criminality, and revealed the inhuman conditions in which millions of immigrants lived, conditions of which the American public was largely ignorant. Like Gardner's *Rebel Sharpshooter*, these anonymous individuals symbolized multitudes.

Italian Mother and Her Baby in Jersey Street (1888, Figure 8.8) explores the pathos of poverty in a composition evoking the Madonna and child. With her mattress and bedclothes bundled atop a barrel, this ragpicker's hovel is as tidy as possible. Riis contrasts the humanity of his subjects' expression and comportment with the poverty of their surroundings and utilized a magnesium flash to illuminate this dark place. Ragpickers are still common in underdeveloped countries. They sort through trash for recyclable materials, which they sell for a pittance to scrap dealers. It is a profession of the poorest, involving long hours, backbreaking labor, and exposure to filth, danger, and disease. For those lured to emigrate to the US by tales of streets paved with gold, being forced by circumstances into a career as a ragpicker must have been disillusioning and disappointing. A passionate social reformer, Riis made slides of his photographs that he used for lectures and illustrations to articles. After reading Riis's 1890 publication *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*, illustrated with engravings made after his photographs, Theodore Roosevelt, then New York Police Commissioner (later president), closed the city police lodgings featured in Riis's book. Riis's documentation also led to the construction of more parks, sanitary water sources, and apartment buildings with air shafts.

Figure 8.8

Jacob Riis, *Italian Mother and Her Baby in Jersey Street*, 1888. Photograph. From *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*, 1890.



PHOTOGRAPHY AND SCIENCE

With the technological improvements made during its first half century, photography was ideally suited to certain scientific applications, including the study of motion. Eadweard Muybridge (1830–1904) began as a photographer of the Western landscape. In 1877 Leland Stanford commissioned Muybridge to photograph his prize racehorse, Occident, in motion. Stanford was governor of California, president of Central Pacific Railroad, and a horse farm owner (on whose Palo Alto estate Stanford University was built). Stanford wanted to understand the mechanics of Occident's speed to improve the training of his other horses. *Galloping Horse* (Figure 8.9) belonged to a series of stop-action photographs made at Stanford's racetrack, some of which appeared in an 1878 edition of *Scientific American*. Muybridge set up a row of cameras at regular intervals equipped with trip wires and set at an exposure time of 1/1000 of a second. He proved for the first time that, at a gallop, all four hooves left the ground simultaneously. Muybridge's photographs furnished data about difficult to perceive phenomena essential to understanding the mechanics of motion. In the 1880s, Austrian scientist Ernst Mach went further, photographing projectiles in flight and sound waves with the help of an electronic flash (developed by Nadar in the 1860s). Muybridge worked for Stanford until 1883, when he moved to the University of Pennsylvania and broadened his motion studies to include humans and a wide range of animals. In order to quantify the results, subjects moved before a grid. In 1887, Muybridge published *Animal Locomotion*, an eleven-volume set containing more than 700 photographs. The next logical step was the reconstitution of motion in sequentially viewed photographs, and Muybridge invented the zoöpraxiscope in 1879, in what was the first step toward motion pictures. This involved equidistantly printing on a small glass disk images in consecutive order that could be rapidly rotated and viewed in sequence through a peep-hole.



To read
Muybridge's
description of his
horse motion photography
go to [www.routledge.com/
textbooks/facs](http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/facs)

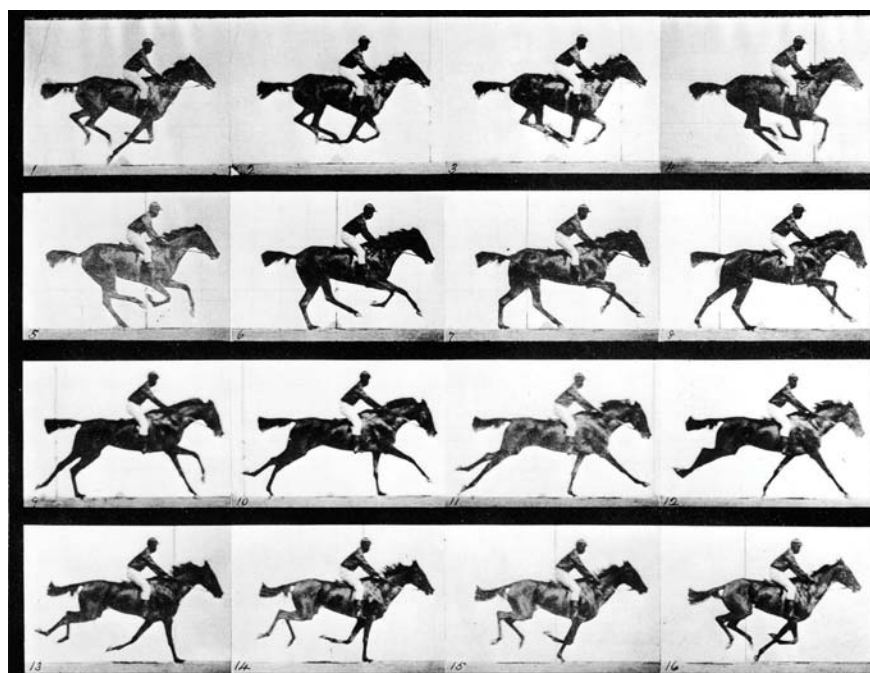


Figure 8.9
Eadweard Muybridge, *Galloping Horse*, 1887. Collotype. From *Animal Locomotion*, 1887.

PORTRAITURE

In 1840 America's first daguerreotype portrait studios opened—in New York by Alexander Wolcott and in Philadelphia by John Johnson. The demand for photographic images was enormous; chains of daguerreotype studios opened in larger cities, and itinerant daguerreotypists traveled the countryside. Matthew Brady opened his Daguerrean Miniature Gallery in New York and provided celebrity portraits to illustrated journals like *Harpers Weekly*. In 1850, Brady issued *Gallery of Illustrious Americans*, satisfying a growing market for celebrity portraits with 12 lithographs based on daguerreotypes of famous contemporary Americans, including President Millard Fillmore. A year later, he won first prize in portraiture at the Crystal Palace exhibition.

The most prestigious American daguerreotype portrait studio belonged to Albert Southworth (1811–94) and Josiah Hawes (1808–1901). Opening in Boston in 1843, Southworth and Hawes's studio catered to prominent, wealthy Americans for almost 20 years. In addition to conventional portraits, distinguished from the stiff, formal images of competitors by their casualness, Southworth and Hawes also produced commemorative portraits of a type common in the nineteenth century but unusual today: death portraits (Figure 8.10). Macabre as it now seems, for many families a death portrait was the last and perhaps only opportunity to capture the likeness of loved ones. This portrait of an anonymous child typifies the Southworth and Hawes style in its naturalness: the child appears clean, healthy, well cared for, and sleeping comfortably. The only clue that the child is deceased is the rosary held in its chubby hands.

André-Adolphe Disdéri (1819–89) made a significant contribution to portrait photography when he developed the *carte-de-visite* (visiting card) portrait in 1854. Disdéri modified his camera to include four lenses and a sliding glass plate holder, enabling him to take eight exposures at once. These trading card size images appealed to a

Figure 8.10

Albert Southworth and Josiah Hawes, *Postmortem Unidentified Child*, c. 1850. Daguerreotype, 17 × 22 cm (6½ × 8½ in). George Eastman House, Rochester, NY.



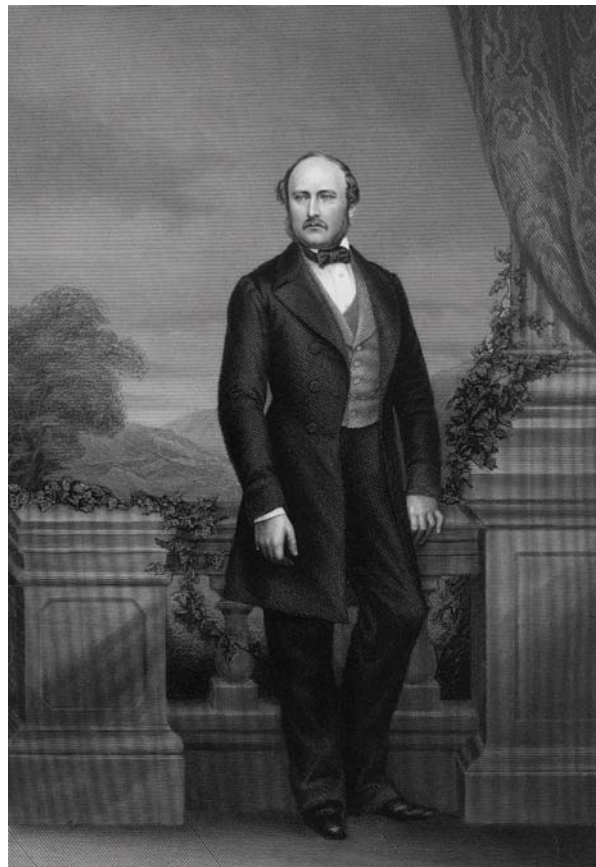


Figure 8.11
John Jabez Mayall, *His late Royal Highness, The Prince Consort*, 1861. Steel engraving, *carte-de-visite*.

bourgeois public accustomed to leaving calling cards (similar to business cards) with their name and address when stopping by to visit friends and acquaintances. Inexpensive to produce, *carte-de-visites* offered a novel, modern alternative to the engraved calling card and became instantly popular in Europe and the US. A market for *carte-de-visites* of celebrities also emerged and had a tangible influence: Abraham Lincoln believed that the distribution of *carte-de-visites* with his image helped to get him elected president in 1860. This was the first national election in which visual images played a decisive role.

When Prince Albert died in 1861, 70,000 *carte-de-visites* bearing his image were sold. Celebrity *carte-de-visites* were collected and assembled into albums. John Jabez Mayall profited from this craze by issuing his *Royal Album* with *carte-de-visite* photographs of the British royal family in 1861 (Figure 8.11, it sold 60,000 copies), as did Pierre Petit with his *Gallery of Contemporaries* (1859), consisting primarily of cultural figures. There were *carte-de-visite* collections in every imaginable category: actors and actresses, beautiful women, ethnographic types, foreign cities, military heroes, musicians and writers, natural wonders, royalty, and sports stars. Taking a cue from this fascination with celebrities, Goupil publishers issued the most ambitious of such compilations, the *Contemporary Gallery of Writers and Artists* (1876–94). These albums contained portraits contributed by France’s most prominent photographers and included famous personalities such as Charles Baudelaire, Victor Hugo, Édouard Manet, and George Sand.

Nadar (1820–1910), the pseudonym of Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, pioneered new techniques such as flash and aerial photography and was France’s most successful society photographer. A man of diverse interests, Nadar studied medicine, worked as a journalist, and joined the armed resistance that failed to liberate Poland in 1848. He studied photography in the 1850s and opened his studio at 35 Boulevard des Capucines (site of the first Impressionist exhibition) in 1860. Nadar strove to create a convincing likeness that conveyed the personality of his sitter, a goal he achieved in *Sarah Bernhardt* (Figure 8.12). Here the young actress appears self-assured and intense. Although a full-length image, only her hands, head, and shoulders are visible, focusing attention on the tools of her trade. Swathed in bulky drapery, Bernhardt adopts a theatrical pose, appearing as a modern muse resting on a classical column. A professional woman in a man’s world, Bernhardt exudes confidence, control, and intelligence.

Different techniques resulted in different pictorial effects. The portraits of Julia Margaret Cameron (1815–79) contrast with the precisely focused, subtly contrasted images of Nadar. Rather than utilizing physiognomic detail as clues to identity, Cameron evoked a more generalized, suggestive image of her sitter’s character. Her portrait of *Sir John Herschel* (1867, Figure 8.13), the eminent chemist and photographer who died in 1871, focuses on the sitter’s head and facial expression. His distinctive head emerges from a plain background, into which his dark clothing blends almost imperceptibly. No elements distract attention from Herschel’s head—a beacon of intelligence. A halo of wild hair surrounds a face whose furrowed brow, set jaw, and

Figure 8.12

Nadar, *Sarah Bernhardt*, 1859.
Wet plate collodion photograph.
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.





Figure 8.13

Julia Margaret Cameron, *Sir John Herschel*, 1867. Albumen print. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

downcast eyes suggest a great mind deep in thought. Herschel's face is unidealized and the photograph unretouched—his white hair, the pouches under his eyes, and his stubbly, lined face are clearly those of an old and wise man. According to Cameron: "When I have these men before my camera, my whole soul has endeavored to do its duty towards them in recording faithfully the greatness of the inner as well as the features of the outer man" (O'Connor 1897: 7).

As an affluent, bourgeois woman Cameron's career possibilities were limited. It would have been socially unacceptable to advertise herself as a professional photographer, although, in fact, she was. Cameron's career began in 1863 when she returned to Britain from India with her husband Charles Cameron, a classics scholar with a fortune in coffee plantations in Ceylon. She taught herself the mechanical and chemical processes of photography and worked on her estate on the Isle of Wight, relying on family, friends, and neighbors as models. London publisher P. and D. Colnaghi marketed Cameron's photographs and she regularly exhibited and won prizes at the Royal Photographic Society, as well as at exhibitions in Berlin and Paris.

LANDSCAPE

One of the most important niches filled by photography was pictures of people and places otherwise inaccessible. The same was true of landscape. The Grand Tour continued into the nineteenth century with parameters extended to adventure tourism. For instance, the Alps, once considered an inconvenient obstacle to Grand Tourists,

Figure 8.14

Auguste-Rosalie Bisson, *Passage des Echelles (Ascent of Mont Blanc)*, 1862. Photograph. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.



became desirable, reflecting new attitudes toward beauty, health, national identity, and nature. Snow-capped summits inspired awe and rapture. The Alps belonged to the natural patrimony of Austria, Bavaria, France, Italy, and Switzerland, whose bureaucrats increasingly felt citizens should be acquainted with them.

Mountain climbing was aesthetically and physically rewarding; for the athletically inclined, the Alps presented an opportunity to test one's manhood. Official French court photographer Auguste-Rosalie Bisson (1826–1900) accompanied Napoleon III and Empress Eugenie on their 1860 trip to the Alps. Not only did the imperial visit popularize alpine tourism, but it demonstrated to the French public the Emperor's possession of the physical and mental fortitude necessary for ruling France. During this trip, Bisson, along with his brother Louis, made the first photographs of Mont Blanc, France's highest peak. When he returned two years later with a team of mountain climbers who ascended Mont Blanc, Bisson photographed *Passage des Echelles (Ascent of Mont Blanc)* (Figure 8.14). Bisson selected a viewpoint emphasizing Alpine nature as vast and overwhelming by omitting the sky and the view into the distance. The climbers appear dwarfed, even trapped, by the convoluted contours of the mountain slopes, recalling Turner's earlier image of Hannibal crossing the Alps (Figure 5.7).

Photography of the American West began after the Civil War. The motivation for it was aesthetic, scientific, and economic: the government and railroad companies wanted to survey the geography to assess possibilities for development. Photographers used mammoth glass plates (20 × 24 inches) to capture the vastness of the wilderness with the greatest possible precision. Thus, rather than enlarging a negative with the loss of detail that involved, contact prints were made, enabling viewers to discern the veins on every leaf. Carleton Watkins (1829–1916) was among the Easterners drawn to California by the Gold Rush. Born in New York State, he moved to California in 1851 and studied photography in San Francisco two years later. He began traveling to Yosemite in 1861. Watkins's renown for photographs such as *Yosemite Valley from Inspiration Point* (Figure 8.15) attracted the attention of government officials in Washington, and he was hired to accompany the Whitney Survey of Yosemite 1866.



Figure 8.15

Carleton Watkins, *Yosemite Valley from Inspiration Point*, 1865–66. Albumen silver print, 40 × 52 cm (15½ × 20½ in). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Images had the power to convince that words lacked. Based largely on Watkins's photographic documentation, Yosemite became the US's first national park. Watkins presented Yosemite as vast and pristine, recognizing that people appreciate tracts of nature apparently untouched by human hands because they evoke associations with Divine creation prior to the Fall. Watkins omitted signs of human presence, reinforcing an impression of a place uncorrupted and unspoiled. Like Friedrich's *Traveler in a Sea of Fog* (Figure 5.15), the viewer stands alone to contemplate majestic nature. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his *Reflections of a Solitary Walker* (1778), described the spiritually rejuvenating effect of being alone in nature, a condition increasingly difficult to experience in an era of industrialization and urbanization. The preservation of Yosemite attests to recognition of the need for such natural havens.

TRAVEL

Fenton provided British audiences with views of the distant and exotic terrain of the Crimea in the 1850s. Earlier, in 1849, the French government sent Maxime du Camp—along with the author Gustave Flaubert—to Egypt to photograph inscriptions and monuments. This enterprise continued the Egyptian documentary project begun by Napoleon; France wanted to maintain its scholarly superiority in the field of Egyptology. Du Camp's images appeared in Louis Désiré Blanquart-Evrard's *Egypt, Nubia, Palestine and Syria* (1846–49), one of many such albums of Holy Land photographs issued in the mid-nineteenth century. In *Colossal Statue of Ramesses II at Abu-Simbel* (Figure 8.16), ancient monuments appear frozen in time; no signs of modernity disturb the eternal quality. Abu Simbel was a temple built by Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses II to demonstrate his power and divinity. Its distinguishing feature is the four colossal (65 feet/20 meters high) paired statues of Ramesses flanking the temple entrance, a tourist attraction since ancient times. To provide scientific information about the temple's scale, du Camp included a native in attire Westerners



For an analysis of the relationship of Watkins's

Yosemite photographs to contemporary landscape painting go to **www.**

routledge.com/textbooks/facos

Figure 8.16

Maxime du Camp, *Colossal Statue of Ramesses II at Abu-Simbel*, c. 1850. Black and white photograph. From Louis Désiré Blanquart-Evrard's *Egypt, Nubia, Palestine and Syria*, 1846–49.



would perceive as foreign and timeless. Because he avoided modern references such as measuring sticks or members of the French photographic team, du Camp conveyed the impression that the image could date from biblical times.

China became an object of fascination in the eighteenth century: wealthy Britons built pagodas on their estates and Chinese porcelain was a status symbol collected by the nobility. Scottish photographer John Thomson (1837–1921) made the British colony of Hong Kong his home base during his extensive travels in China between 1868 and 1872. *Physic Street, Canton* (Figure 8.17) shows a typical urban street scene, comparable in its banality to Hummel's *Granite Bowl* (Figure 7.6) or Frith's *Railway Station* (Figure 7.14). However, British viewers of Thomson's four-volume *Illustrations of China and Its People* (1873) were less likely to notice the banality of the scene than to be mesmerized by the indecipherable signs and exotic physiognomies and attire captured by the photographer. Photography was also used to generate interest in domestic travel: in the 1850s the French government commissioned Édouard Baldus (1813–89) to document France's classical and medieval past in a project entitled *The Towns of France Photographed*.

PHOTOGRAPHY AS A FINE ART

Was photography art? Those who agreed understood the skill, knowledge, and creativity required to produce a good photograph. Those who did not considered photography a mechanical process which at best demanded less expertise than



Figure 8.17
John Thomson, *Physic Street, Canton*, from *Illustrations of China and Its People*, 1873.

painting or sculpture and at worst was closely related to industrial manufacturing. Charles Baudelaire, poet and art critic, proclaimed photography “the servant of the sciences and arts ... like printing or shorthand” in his review of the 1859 Salon of Photography (Baudelaire 1964: 668). Many artists were interested in photography, and Corot, Gustave Courbet, and Jean François Millet were among those who collected photographs and used them as references for paintings. These artists also experimented with the hybrid process *cliché verre*, which involved drawing on a collodion glass plate that then was printed. Their interest in this new technique evidenced a modern urge for experimentation in art motivated partly by a quest for effective means to express ideas, partly by sheer curiosity.

Gustave Le Gray was a landscape photographer determined to show that photographs could be as artful as paintings. His compositions conformed to traditional expectations for landscape, and his efforts were rewarded by a gold medal at the 1855 Exposition universelle in Paris. Le Gray’s *View of the Sea: The Brig* (Figure 8.18) was a seascape, a genre in demand in sea-faring nations since its initial rise to popularity in seventeenth-century Holland. Perfectly centered, the ship, its sails unfurled, seems

Figure 8.18

Gustave Le Gray, *View of the Sea: The Brig*, c. 1856. Albumen print. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.



the master of calm seas. The composition is simple and the effect uncomplicated. However, while Le Gray seemed to capture a specific moment, he actually combined two negatives to create this photograph—one of the ship on the water and one of the sky. Because the exposure time for sky was shorter than for land, images printed from a single negative often had bleached skies devoid of clouds. Although combination printing solved this problem, this process was not easy. Many photographs using this method have disturbing inconsistencies between sky and water, inexplicable reflections in the water, two different times of day reproduced together, or obvious seams at the horizon. Le Gray, however, was a master, and no such discrepancies are evident.

Despite his success, Le Gray abandoned photography by the end of the 1850s for financial reasons. Not only was he uninterested in producing commercially viable images, preferring to experiment with printing techniques, but his patron, the Count de Briges, withdrew his support. In 1858, Le Gray left his family in Paris, ending up as a design professor in Egypt. Still hoping to gain proper recognition for photography, Le Gray exhibited a group of calotypes at the 1859 Salon. While they initially hung in the lithograph section, officials moved the photographs to the science section once they realized Le Gray's images were not prints in the accepted sense of the word. This event sealed Le Gray's resolve to abandon photography.

The Swede Oscar Gustav Rejlander (1817–75) studied painting in Italy during the 1830s, moved to England in the 1840s, and took up photography in 1855. Rejlander believed photography should preserve the values of academic painting by depicting morally instructive narratives. *Two Ways of Life* (1857, Figure 8.19) is an allegory of the choice between good and evil. The young men at the photograph's center are on the verge of adulthood and have made the moral choice between a life of indulgence in worldly pleasures and a life dedicated to intellectual and spiritual pursuits. In a further effort to situate his image within the bounds of tradition, Rejlander based his composition on Raphael's *School of Athens* (1510). The right side—the side of virtue

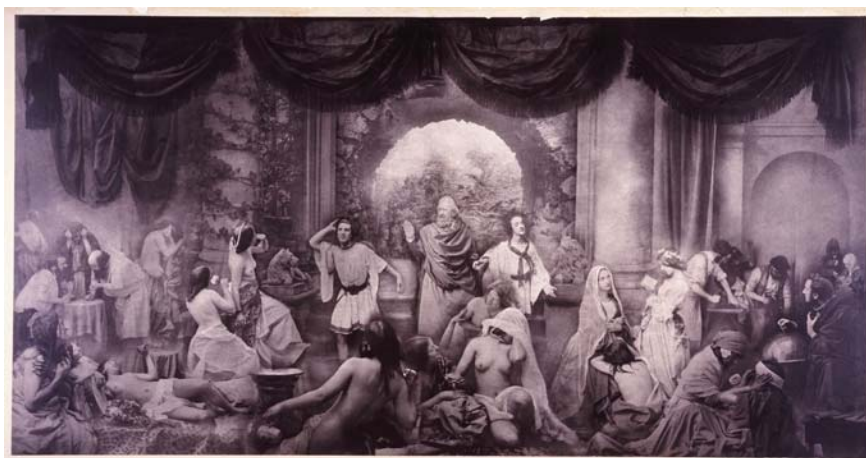


Figure 8.19
Oscar Gustav Rejlander, *Two Ways of Life*, 1857. Photograph.
National Media Museum,
Bradford, UK.

—is symbolized by a youth, eyes closed, who follows his heart. Theatrical gestures communicate virtuous activities—praying, reading, and working—that attract him. The youth on the left, in contrast, is alert and clearly responds to his senses rather than his intellect. He is seduced by vain and sensual nude women. Rejlander portrays life's choices as unambiguous and the dichotomy between good and evil, self-evident.

Rejlander made five copies of *Two Ways of Life*, one of which Queen Victoria and Prince Albert purchased. First exhibited in Manchester, its nudity excited a controversy. Despite its allegorical subject, some viewers found the nudes (allegedly more realistic than painted ones) offensive, and when *Two Ways of Life* was subsequently exhibited in even more conservative Edinburgh, the nude figures were draped. While today one could stage such an image in a single exposure (or fabricate it with Photoshop), Rejlander had to make photographs of individual figures and objects and then cut out and assemble the negatives like a giant puzzle before printing: the photograph is made from more than 30 negatives.

Lady Clementina Hawarden (1822–65)—whose social position, like Cameron's, did not permit her to declare herself a professional—produced poetic photographs of the confined life of upper-class women. Her images conformed to conventional attitudes about women as household angels, isolated in domestic bowers where they insured a harmonious and nurturing family life. According to this view, a woman's moral goodness could only be assured if protected from the corruption of the outside world like a nun in a convent. Hawarden's daughters often served as her models, posing in gauzy white dresses that suggested spiritual purity and aesthetic grace. Bourgeois women stayed indoors because it was believed that their constitutions were too fragile to tolerate fresh air and direct sunlight. These conditions weakened women, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy in a society where sickly pallor was considered beautiful.

Clementina in Underclothes (1862–63, Figure 8.20) typifies Hawarden's introspective, elegant, respectable images of young women. Mirrors are conventional symbols of vanity because of the subject's ability to examine herself but, here, the moral virtue of Hawarden's *Clementina* is suggested by the fact that she does not look at herself. Perhaps with the purpose of situating this photograph within the boundaries of tradition, Hawarden included a glimpse of a window situated at an angle frequently found in the seventeenth-century paintings of Vermeer, which often featured solitary women.

Figure 8.20

Lady Clementina Hawarden,
Clementina in Underclothes,
1862–63. Photograph. Victoria
& Albert Museum, London.



Peter Henry Emerson (1856–1936) was committed to promoting photography as a fine art, and bitterly opposed what he considered the deceptions of composite photography. To combat the artifice and materialism he felt were ruining British society, Emerson wrote books to promote an alternative view, including *Naturalistic Photography* (1889). Emerson called his style naturalism because he printed a single, unmanipulated negative, a technique he considered more natural. He also used a lens he felt closely approximated human vision. Emerson maintained that vision is sharp only at the point of focus and that to achieve this in photography a lens with a long focal length should be used. While this might be true in theory, in practice, the eye travels quickly over the visual field, providing the brain with enough accurate information to form a lucid and detailed picture.

Like Constable half a century earlier, Emerson, who abandoned a medical career for photography, resolved to document an English rural life threatened by industrialization. The son of wealthy American plantation owners, Emerson grew up in England. He bought his first camera in 1881, and in 1885, the same year he graduated from medical school, founded the Camera Club of London. Emerson moved to the region of Norfolk, East Anglia, whose flat, open landscape and fishing villages he found appealing. In more than a half-dozen limited edition books containing either platinum prints (paper coated with the most costly metal, platinum) or photogravures, Emerson documented the lives of English peasants. His photographs combine nostalgia with nationalism, since Emerson believed that a nation's identity was embedded in its rural landscape and inhabitants. There, true English values survived, unaffected by

international trends and degenerate materialism. In the countryside of East Anglia, Emerson discovered the honest social relations, dedication to community, hard work, and interdependent relationship with the land that he felt epitomized the English character. No signs of modernity emerge in *Gathering Water Lilies* (Figure 8.21). These two men in a boat appear to live a leisurely life in symbiotic harmony with nature, a life contrasting with those of contemporary urbanites. Harvesting water lilies was an age-old practice; the plant was long appreciated for its medicinal qualities. Peasants applied it externally in order to control ailments including dysentery, diarrhea, and gonorrhea. The root is astringent and also useful for soothing pain. The leaves and roots were boiled to make poultices used to treat skin conditions (boils, scrofulous ulcers, and inflammation); an infusion (tea) made from the roots and leaves was found effective when gargled in relieving mouth and throat ulcers and inflammation. Emerson thus captures the interdependence of people and nature and the special ability of peasants to understand the riches of their environment.

Emerson utilized photographing and printing techniques intended to foster contemplation and nostalgia. Committed to his own idea of truth, Emerson did not believe in manipulating or editing photographs. Photography, he felt, should be “naturalistic.” For him, truth to nature entailed accurately representing the depth of space and density of atmosphere. Emerson believed that photography was the equal of other arts, but with its own rules.

Emerson published his photographs in two albums—*Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads* (1886) and *Pictures of East Anglian Life* (1888)—whose images and sequencing were carefully planned. He hoped this approach would convince viewers that a return to rural ways would lead to a happy, healthy life. Although similarly committed to social reform, Emerson adopted a very different strategy from Riis both in terms of subject and aesthetic presentation. This attests to the freedom late nineteenth-century artists had to establish and pursue their goals. It also shows how artists with similar objectives considered different strategies the best way to achieve them. Nonetheless, devising effective means of communicating ideas became more challenging as Western society became more diverse.



Figure 8.21
Peter Henry Emerson, *Gathering Water Lilies*, 1886. Platinotype, 20 × 29 cm (7⅞ × 11½ in). Museum of Modern Art, New York.

PICTORIALISM AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Pictorialism, an international movement seeking to promote photography as a fine art, began in 1889. Members subordinated fact to beauty and encouraged experimentation. Manipulating negatives and the printing process enabled photographers to achieve a wide range of aesthetic effects and to distinguish their artful work from the flood of banal documentary images. According to the Pictorialists, a good photograph evidenced the stamp of its maker's singular, personal expression. Although Pictorialists were not explicit about how this should be achieved, their photographs—Emerson's for example—are often recognizable by their beautiful surfaces, subtle tonal relationships, and evocation of mood.

The struggle for photography's acceptance as fine art became intense in the 1890s under the leadership of Pictorialist photographers who organized and mobilized. The Kamera Klub in Vienna and The Club of Photographic Art Lovers in Lvov, Poland formed in 1891, followed by The Linked Ring (whose membership included Emerson) in London in 1892. The Linked Ring sponsored the first annual exhibition of Pictorialist photography in 1893. The same year, museum director Alfred Lichtwark staged the Hamburg Kunsthalle's first International Exhibition of Amateur Photography, displaying more than 7,000 photographs in the painting galleries, a bold and controversial decision. The Munich Secession—an independent exhibiting organization established by painters and sculptors to compete with the Academy—was the first to include photographs in its art exhibitions, in 1898. Although this landmark event paved the way for the inclusion of photography in art exhibitions, not until the twentieth century was photography truly accepted as a fine art.

Along with rapid improvements in the chemical and technical processes for producing photographs came improvements in cheap and mass reproduction. A rapid rise in literacy, along with an urban population explosion, generated a demand for books, journals, and newspapers, preferably illustrated ones. Because photographic prints could only be produced a few at a time, a method was needed to reproduce them in ink, a much cheaper and quicker process, and one which could be integrated on the same page as the printed word. Until 1875, when Charles Gillot developed a photomechanical process for producing metal relief plates directly from photographs, wood engravers translated images from drawings, prints, paintings, and photographs onto the end grain of wood blocks that were then inked and printed. Guillot's process could only reproduce lines and blocks of solid color—it was incapable of producing shadows or nuances of shade. Because it was photomechanical, it was much quicker, more accurate, and less expensive than wood engraving, and could be integrated onto a printed page. In 1880, Stephen Horgan, a photographer for the *New York Daily Graphic*, developed the half-tone process. This translated photographic images into series of tiny dots, resulting in more nuanced images than Guillot's process. Because half-tone plates were in relief, they could easily be adapted to letterpress printing presses. In 1886, Ottmar Mergenthaler invented the more rapid and efficient linotype process, the process by which newspapers were printed until the late twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

With its ability to capture with mechanical precision the details of the visible world, photography encroached on territory previously occupied by drawing and painting. This encroachment intensified as chemical and optical refinements were made, and the process became easier, quicker, and more exact. At the same time, photographers were denigrated as mere mechanics by critics unaware of the aesthetic control exercised by photographers in the arrangement or selection of motifs and the development and printing processes. In their quest for acceptance as artists, some photographers imitated the subjects and compositions of paintings, while others purposefully avoided the clarity and exactitude for which photography was known. While photography's "scientific" character gave it singular authority when documenting architecture, landscape, and people, it also prompted artists to think more deeply about the special properties of traditional art processes.

For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter, along with pictures of Yosemite, www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.



Realism and the Urban Poor

By 1848, social tensions in Western Europe, generated by the steadily increasing prosperity of the middle and upper classes and the steadily escalating privation of the working and peasant classes (Figure 9.1), was exacerbated by massive unemployment and rapidly rising food prices. The dry forest of social unrest needed only a spark to ignite into violence, especially in cities. There skilled craftsmen's careers were doomed by industrialization and business and government employees felt disenfranchised by an antiquated power structure. The spark that kindled the fire of revolution occurred in Paris on 22 February 1848. A mass meeting, advertised as a "banquet" in order to circumvent laws against public assembly, was attacked by Louis-Philippe's National Guard. Public outrage led to Louis-Philippe's abdication on the 24th, and universal male suffrage (increasing the number of French voters from 250,000 to 8 million) was declared by the provisional government. Revolution then erupted in Austria, resulting in the resignation of the foreign minister, Prince Klemens von Metternich, who actually ran the empire. Taking advantage of the Austrian government's temporary weakness, Hungarian nationalists led by Lajos

Figure 9.1

Shallabala (R.J. Hamerton),
Capital and Labor from *Punch*,
29 July 1843, p. 48.



Kossuth successfully demanded greater autonomy for Hungary, but Czech nationalists led by František Palacký failed to win any new rights, and occupying Austrian forces were expelled from Venice. In the Italian territories, the King of Naples, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the Pope were all forced to approve constitutions. The Polish gentry, hampered by apathetic peasants who saw no point in replacing one ruling class with another, tried unsuccessfully to liberate themselves from Russian rule. And in Prussia, on 18 March, the brutal suppression of demonstrators in Berlin resulted in 200 deaths. The following day, Prussian Emperor Friedrich Wilhelm IV withdrew the army and announced a constitutional monarchy and electoral reform.

In the recurring violence plaguing Paris in 1848, most arrests were either of displaced peasants or skilled craftsmen. Cut loose from the moorings of village, family, and community, former peasants constituted a faction as insecure and politically unstable as skilled craftsmen, whose occupations were becoming obsolete. During the next three years, peasants radicalized. This situation frightened middle-class voters into electing conservative representatives and welcoming the December 1851 *coup d'état* of Napoleon III (Napoleon I's nephew), who had been elected president of the Second Republic in December 1848. Tension between the working/peasant classes and the middle classes escalated, culminating with the abdication of Napoleon III in 1871, following France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War.

CONTRASTING RESPONSES TO 1848

Comparing Ernest Meissonier's *Memory of Civil War (The Barricades)* (1848, Figure 9.2) with Alfred Rethel's *Another Dance of Death* (1849, Figure 9.3) reveals how different contexts (as well as different artistic personalities) generated divergent responses to similar events. Although both artists aspired to mainstream careers as history painters, their training nurtured disparate approaches. Rethel (1816–59) studied at the Düsseldorf Academy (1829–34), where the ideals of its director, Nazarene painter Wilhelm Schadow, were taught by Carl Friedrich Lessing (1808–80). When Lessing departed for a post at the art academy in Frankfurt, Rethel followed. Rethel's outstanding achievement in painting were the frescos, funded by Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, depicting the life of medieval German emperor Charlemagne in the town hall of Aachen, capital of the Holy Roman Empire in the early ninth century. They expressed the yearning of Germans for unification and established a link between Rethel's era and the national past in a manner similar to the contemporaneous project of monumental painting for Britain's Houses of Parliament (Chapter 7). Meissonier (1815–91), in contrast, was largely self-taught. The most financially successful French artist in the second half of the nineteenth century, he executed a wide variety of subjects—portraits, history paintings, and scenes of contemporary life. Thus, from the outset, Meissonier was probably less attached to tradition than the academically trained Rethel.

In *Memory of Civil War*, Meissonier depicted the consequence of a street battle during the June 1848 uprising in Paris. More than 50 percent of French workers lost their jobs in May 1848 when the National Assembly closed federally funded work programs, and in the ensuing riots 1,500 were killed and 12,000 arrested. Meissonier shows a moment when the barricade constructed of paving stones (the result of Louis-Philippe's road modernization and the cause of the brutalized labor recorded in Courbet's *Stone Breakers*, Figure 10.7) has been breached by government troops.



Figure 9.2

Ernest Meissonier, *Memory of Civil War (The Barricades)*, 1848. Oil on canvas, 29 × 22 cm (11 × 8 in). Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 9.3

Alfred Rethel, *Death as Victor*, plate 1 from *Another Dance of Death*, 1849. Woodcut. Wellcome Library, London.

The corpses of its defenders are scattered in a disarray similar to the stones; their clothing and scruffy appearance identifies them as workers. Amidst this carnage, no weapons appear, just the grotesquely twisted bodies of desperate working men driven to political resistance by intolerable living conditions and a government that prioritized bourgeois prosperity over working-class survival. As a National Guard reserve officer, Meissonier participated in the revolt's suppression and witnessed horrifying scenes that made him question Second Republic policies and its unfulfilled commitment to defending Republican principles: liberty, equality, and solidarity. Meissonier evidenced his critical stance by choosing a palette dominated by the blue, red, and white of the Republican flag.

The banal details in *Memory of Civil War* convey an impression of journalistic truth known as Realism. Not the visual realism of David and Ingres with their minutely detailed, life-like images where fantasy and reality intertwined in the imaginary world of painting, or even of the Pre-Raphaelites with their strict fidelity to empirical observation—this was social Realism, which described the everyday world of contemporary common people with the same attention previously reserved for subjects deemed important by the ruling elite. Because of its egalitarian attitude toward subject matter, social Realism appealed particularly to artists whose political sympathies were progressive and democratic.

Like Delacroix in *Massacre at Chios* (Figure 6.15), Meissonier depicted a scene of carnage, but without the drama, emotion, and exoticism of Romanticism. Meissonier included sufficient descriptive detail to identify this street as rue de l'Hôtel de Ville and individualized the figures enough to seem accurate. Meissonier created a feeling of immediacy (although he staged the scene using models in conformity with academic practice) by painting the foreground scene in great detail and situating the viewer in close proximity to it, while utilizing the demolished barricade as a reassuring barrier between the dead and the living. Although Meissonier had Delacroix's *Liberty* (Figure 3.13) as a point of reference, *Memory of Civil War* does not possess the same sense of universal tragedy and triumph conveyed by Delacroix's work, with its inclusion of various ages and classes, soldiers and civilians. Instead, it recalled the tragic government scandal of Géricault's *Raft* (Figure 3.11) without the redemptive presence of survivors. *Memory of Civil War*'s generic character simultaneously evoked thousands of similar scenes occurring in cities throughout Europe in 1848. The very small scale of *Memory of Civil War* situated it within the realm of a private reminiscence more than a large-scale history painting, a fact that would have made it less threatening to the jury which selected it for inclusion in the 1850–51 Salon.

Another Dance of Death presented Rethel's interpretation of events in a symbolic, yet immediately comprehensible, story in pictures. In the sixth and final image, Death, personified as a skeleton and wearing a victory wreath, rides triumphantly through the devastation he incited. In earlier scenes, Rethel showed Death misleading the gullible and volatile working classes into a violent uprising resulting in their own slaughter. Here, the workers' neighborhood lies in ruins, contrasting with the tidy middle-class town square and streets beyond protected by vigilant, well-armed soldiers. A woman and half-naked boy wail in grief, conceivably over the death of their husband/father and the uncertainty of their future. Death—securely holding the huge, billowing flag of revolution—addresses a dying man, whose parted lips may be uttering the question, “Why?” The man's head is thrown back in anguish and desperation in a manner reminiscent of Préault's *Tuerie* (Figure 4.14) and Géricault's *Medusa*. Death's mount,

an exhausted version of the steed in West's *Death on a Pale Horse* (Figure 4.2), seems to slurp blood from the chest wound of a corpse, in a final act of desecration.

Europe's middle classes felt entitled to a voice in government because it was their taxes that largely financed it. At the same time, their fear of instability, with its threat to hard-won economic, political, and social gains, far outweighed feelings of solidarity with the peasant/working classes, whom they tended to regard with suspicion. This attitude, prevalent among Europe's ambitious, self-disciplined, and prosperous middle classes, informed Rethel's interpretation of the events of 1848. Rethel's conservatism emerged in the mainstream middle-class attitude informing *Another Dance of Death* and in his adoption of a subject and technique linked to German tradition. During the Medieval and Renaissance periods, woodcut prints were more prevalent in Germany than elsewhere. Two of the most illustrious practitioners of the woodcut technique, Albrecht Dürer and Hans Holbein (1498–1543), were celebrated in the nineteenth century as prototypical German artists. In the context of 1848, Holbein's two Dance of Death series, familiar to German audiences because they were reprinted in cheap editions beginning in the 1820s, assumed new relevancy. Holbein's sets of six woodcut prints depict encounters of individuals with Death—a peasant child is led out of his cottage as his horrified mother looks on, a noblewoman is guided into her grave, a soldier is run through with a lance. Rethel revived this pictorial tradition partly because of its status as quintessentially German during a period when the German states were negotiating unification, and partly because of its ability to accommodate a multi-part narrative. Rethel's series enjoyed instantaneous appeal; in May 1849, the month *Another Dance of Death* debuted, continuing violence left more than 250 dead in Dresden, and by June the series had gone through two editions. A year later, 15,000 sets had been sold.

URBAN MIGRATION

The revolutions of 1848 stemmed from widespread economic and social tensions with violence occurring primarily in urban areas. In contrast to provincial towns and villages, cities were seas of strangers who shared no common identity, sense of purpose, or mutual responsibility. They were, in the words of Karl Marx (1818–83), alienated. Fascinated and alarmed by demographic and economic changes, Marx and his collaborator Friedrich Engels (1820–95) formulated a new theory to explain contemporary social and economic changes and their long-term consequences. Based on historical study and the analysis of recent trends—particularly in England, which was most industrialized—they concluded that once a critical mass of oppressed workers was reached, revolution would occur, and an egalitarian, democratic society of worker-owned businesses would emerge. Delacroix expressed the thoughts of many in his 16 May 1853 journal entry:

Instead of transforming the human race into a vile herd, let it have its real heritage—its attachment, its devotion to the soil! ... Alas, poor peasants, poor villagers! ... they are rushing headlong to the cities, where nothing but disappointment awaits them; there they complete the perversion of these feelings of dignity offered by the love of labor, and the more your machines feed them, the more they will become degraded!

(Delacroix 1938: 328–9)

In most cases, migration was not by choice. A confluence of factors—land reform, population explosion, famine, and political and religious oppression—forced tens of millions to leave their ancestral villages and ways of life.

"The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere ... The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor? ... Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange, and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells."

Source: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" in *Selected Works*, vol. 1, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1968, pp. 38–40.

Between 1800 and 1900, the population of Europe almost doubled (from 190 to 390 million), a growth rate higher than at any other period in human history. Expansion of cities was most dramatic—London and Paris's populations increased four-fold, Moscow more than five-fold, and Berlin more than ten-fold. Bureaucracies, essential services, and infrastructure arose in response to, rather than in anticipation of, growth, which meant that despite steady improvements, conditions were perpetually inadequate, with the working classes suffering the most from the lack of health care, housing, police, and transportation. Working couples spent 65–80 percent of their income on food, making it difficult to maintain a family even at the subsistence level.

Artists devoted increasing attention to urban subjects after 1840. Inspired partly by an urge to represent for posterity their own time and place in a world that looked very different than it had a generation earlier, artists looked with greater intensity at the working class, the group which grew the fastest and epitomized the modern world. Attitudes expressed by artists varied from admiration and fascination to outrage, pessimism, and sympathy. The styles artists adopted also varied, depending on their intentions and the technique they felt best conveyed their ideas. The artists most occupied with working-class life were often reform-

oriented. They represented realities overlooked by earlier art, which earned them the label Realist. Realist artists often focused on the deplorable conditions of women and children. Their lives changed the most drastically under urbanization, and their choices—due to legal, social, and economic constraints—were most limited. Other artists, enthralled by the dynamism of industrialization, concentrated on the energy and technology of factories, sometimes suggesting the beneficial potential of their rational organization and productivity.

SOCIAL UNREST

Attitudes toward industrialization varied depending on whether one believed in the social benefits of a free-market economy or agreed with Marx and Engels that private ownership of the means of production is a tool of social oppression. The view of industry as an infernal force ravaging the countryside (and presumably the lives of its inhabitants) began to emerge around 1800, in works such as de Louthembourg's *Coalbrookdale at Night* (Figure 5.1). Industrialization deprived peasants of the cottage industry income on which they depended and fostered violent conflict with skilled workers engaged in hand manufacture, such as the silk weavers of Lyon. In 1834, Lyon's disgruntled silk workers mounted a general strike in protest of lowered silk prices, a ban on unionizing, and an average work week of 90 hours. The arrest and trial of its leaders led to riots in April 1834, and news of events in Lyon precipitated sympathy protests in working-class Parisian neighborhoods. In the rue Transnonain in Paris, an enraged sympathizer sniping from his apartment window killed a soldier, and shortly afterwards, the building was stormed by troops who stabbed to death eight men, a woman, and a child with swords and bayonets.

Honoré Daumier (1808–79) condemned this barbaric and illegal revenge in *Rue Transnonain, 15 April 1834* (Figure 9.4), which appeared in the monthly journal *L'Association Mensuelle*. *Rue Transnonain* revealed the duplicity of Louis-Philippe's July Monarchy, which promised liberal policies, but enforced repressive ones. By forcing the viewer into an uncomfortable proximity to this horrific scene of slaughter, Daumier created a poignant piece of anti-government propaganda about an event that he knew only through media reports. The helter-skelter disposition of corpses—with a father lying atop his child, from whose head wound a trail of blood oozes—disheveled bed sheets, overturned chair, and spattered blood attest to a scene of ruthless violence, whose eerie aftermath we witness from the low vantage point of a hypothetical survivor. The dead worker, whose muscular legs protrude from his blood-stained night shirt, echoes the half-naked corpse in the foreground of Delacroix's *Liberty* (Figure 3.13), and anticipates Meissonier's scene of carnage on the barricades.

Unlike Meissonier, Daumier studied art (at the independent Académie Suisse) in Paris during the 1820s. He worked for a lithographer, where he quickly mastered this new printing technique, which involved drawing with oil crayon on a flat stone. Ink was then applied, which adhered only to those areas untouched by the crayon. Paper pressed onto the inked side of stone absorbed the ink, and a print resulted. Unlike etching plates, lithography stones could be wiped clean and reused. Passionately interested in politics as well as art, Daumier began publishing satirical prints and caricature in Parisian newspapers in 1829, and in 1832 began publishing regularly in *Charivari*, the first daily paper to print lithographs. Committed to egalitarian Republican ideals, he, like Delacroix, welcomed the overthrow of the repressive Charles X in the



Figure 9.4

Honoré Daumier, *Rue Transnonain, 15 April 1834*, 1834. Lithograph, 45 × 29 cm (17 × 11 in). Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

July Revolution of 1830. Daumier's political cartoons critical of the new regime of Louis-Philippe landed him in jail for six months in 1831, and in 1835, the government banned political caricature altogether. Subsequently, and until his departure from *Charivari* in 1860, Daumier focused instead on social satire that targeted the hypocrisy of the Parisian bourgeoisie.

ALCOHOLISM

Even among the middle classes, ruin and destitution often lay just around the corner. George Cruikshank (1792–1878) illustrated the devastating effect gin (the most popular hard liquor in England) could have on respectable families. His first pictorial moral tale, *The Bottle* (1847), executed the year he gave up drinking and smoking, sold 100,000 copies within a few weeks of publication. Its success encouraged him to continue the narrative in the equally successful *The Drunkard's Children* (1848). As a result, Cruikshank abandoned a successful career in acting for illustration, becoming one of the most popular and prolific illustrators of the century. He illustrated editions of the Grimm Brothers' tales, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, but was a social reformer at heart. Since Cruikshank's father had died of alcoholism, the dangers-of-drink theme had great personal significance. It was a topic that touched the lives of many, as evidenced by the fact that *The Drunkard's Children* inspired a play with the same title that was performed at London's Surrey Theatre in 1848, where theatergoers could purchase Cruikshank's illustrated folio for

one shilling. Its eight scenes trace the degeneration of a bourgeois family. Although Cruikshank showed drink leading to poverty, usually the situation was reversed.

In the first image from *The Bottle*, *The Bottle is Brought out for the First Time* (Figure 9.5), an irresponsible husband offers his reluctant wife a glass of gin, a gender reversal of the biblical temptation of Adam by Eve. That both parents have up to this point successfully fulfilled their familial and social responsibilities is clear in every detail. The children appear healthy, well-mannered, and well-dressed; economic prosperity as the reward for hard work is confirmed by comfortable furnishings, plenty to eat, and housecats. Cruikshank depicted the Victorian family ideal encouraged by advice manuals, popular magazines such as *The Family Economist*, church pulpits, celebrated in literature, and modeled by the royal family, as Landseer affirmed a few years earlier in *Windsor Castle in Modern Times* (Figure 7.2). These values were embraced by all levels of English society, as evidenced by the self-taught, working-class poet John Critchley Prince in his 1843 poem “The Poet’s Sabbath:”

*I cross the threshold—take my accustomed seat.
And feel, as I have always felt, that home is sweet!
My wife receives me with a quiet smile,
Gentle and kind as wife should ever be;
My joyous little ones press round the while,
And take their wonted places on my knee ...*

(Prince 1880: 16)

Prince suggested that the separation of spheres, with the husband attending to public matters and the wife managing the home, maintained a social balance leading to domestic bliss.

According to this model, love of God and country generated social stability and personal happiness. Cruikshank signaled the former by portraits of Queen

Figure 9.5

George Cruikshank, *The Bottle is Brought Out for the First Time*, plate 1 from *The Bottle*, 1847. Engraving. Wellcome Library, London.



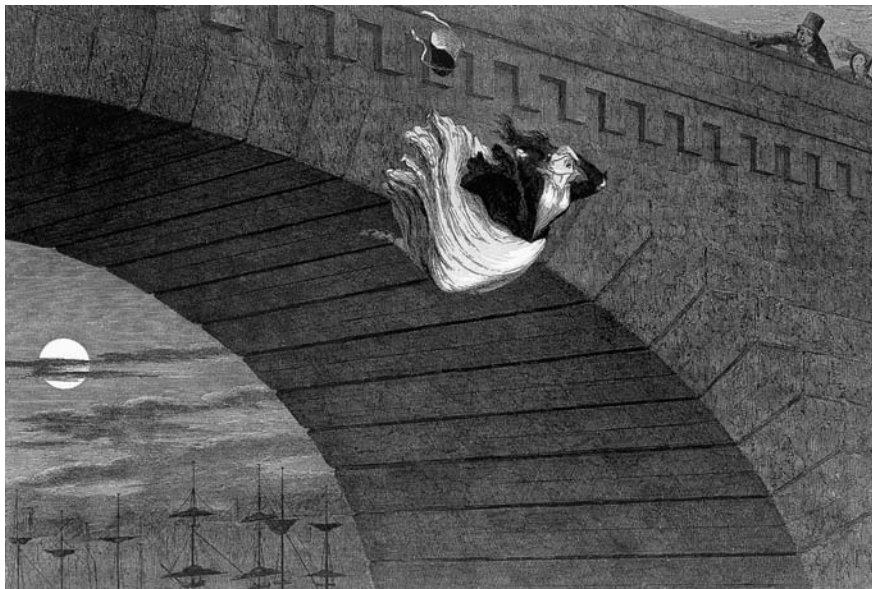


Figure 9.6

George Cruikshank, *The Gin-Crazed Girl Commits Suicide*, plate 8 from *The Drunkard's Children*, 1848. Engraving. Wellcome Library, London.

Victoria and Prince Albert on the mantelpiece, and the latter, by the artwork on the wall—a church whose placement indicates the centrality of piety and virtue in the Victorian home. Religious organizations in Victorian England assumed an active role in the moral education of the working classes: by 1850, more than 75 percent of working-class children attended Sunday school, although fewer than five percent attended regular school.

Since obedience to one's husband was a cardinal rule of wifely conduct in the nineteenth century, the irresponsible, weak-willed, and eventually insane father is to blame for the demise of his family. In the second scene, the father loses his job, and soon afterward the family falls into debt and their worldly belongings are repossessed. The family turns to begging, spending even that money on gin. In the fifth scene, *Cold, Misery, and Want Destroy Their Youngest Child*, the chubby animated girl who played with her brother in scene one now lies in a casket, and the once cozy home has fallen into disrepair and is stripped of its contents. The church, royal family and everything they stand for have disappeared. Miserable and reduced to rags, the mother and children grieve, while the father, wild-eyed and clutching the gin bottle, has fallen into the abyss of apathy. Degeneration is complete in the final scenes: the father becomes violent, killing the mother with a broken gin bottle, and vanishes into the British penal system. Abandoned, the children also turn to drink; their story is chronicled in *The Drunkard's Children*. The son is arrested for robbery and dies in prison, while the daughter “homeless, friendless, deserted, destitute, and gin mad,” as the title to one of the final scenes states, commits suicide by jumping off London's Westminster Bridge (Figure 9.6).

FEMALE SUICIDE

The drunkard's daughter is ashamed and without a meaningful purpose in society. A horrified couple (potential good Samaritans, had they arrived in time), watch aghast as she plummets to certain death. The dramatic composition—with its off-center concentric arches and nocturnal setting—suggests the spiritual darkness and

emotional abyss into which the daughter has fallen (through her own weakness) or been forced (by circumstances beyond her control). Here, Cruikshank adopted a common format for representing female suicide. In both contemporary literature and illustration, suicidal women frequently were shown casting themselves from windows and bridges into rivers. The setting for these images was always the city; such despair was specifically associated with urban alienation and desperation, as evidenced by the fact that one of Charles Dickens's characters—Martha Endell in *David Copperfield* (1850)—contemplates suicide by drowning.

This penchant for representing drowning women reflected contemporary reality—drowning was the most common means of suicide for women in the nineteenth century; men preferred hanging. In England, although many more men actually committed suicide, depictions and descriptions of them are rare, while female suicides appeared frequently in popular one-shilling books, novels, newspapers, prints, and paintings. Bridge-jumping was the most commonly represented method of female suicide, despite the fact that most women quietly filled their pockets with stones and plunged into a nearby pond or canal. Still, in 1840, 30 of a reported 200 suicides took place from Waterloo Bridge and by 1874 suicide by drowning had become such a problem in London that the Royal Humane Society set up rescue stations around the most popular waterside suicide spots with personnel trained in first aid and resuscitation.

Cruikshank's Emma leaps into the Thames, the river that was both London's main artery of commerce and little more than an open sewer, whose reeking stench caused an adjournment in the House of Commons in 1858. According to contemporary reports, the Thames—from which Londoners obtained their drinking water—contained dung, slaughterhouse and hospital refuse, runoff from the manufacturing of drugs, soap, and poisons, and the carcasses of dogs, rats, and people. In contemporary lore, the polluted Thames symbolized criminality and moral degeneracy, a magnet for those suffering from anxiety and despair, in a society where "survival of the fittest" was a cruel reality.

At the other end of Europe, the Russian painter Vasily Perov (1834–82) recorded the aftermath of a female suicide (1867, Figure 9.7). Perov studied at the

Figure 9.7

Vasily Perov, *Drowned*, 1867. Oil on canvas, 68 × 106 cm (26¾ × 41⅝ in). Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Moscow Academy and admired the moralizing satire of Hogarth. He was a founding member of the Artists' Cooperative Society, an anti-establishment secessionist Russian group founded in 1863 that rejected the rigid curriculum, hierarchy of subjects, and intolerance of experimentation characterizing state art academies. Rejecting foreign (academic) influences, Cooperative artists were Realists who wanted to paint modern Russian subjects for a Russian audience. In 1870 they changed their name to Association of Traveling Art Exhibitions, popularly known as The Wanderers, reflecting their goal to bring exhibitions to rural Russia, where art had never before been shown. The Wanderers specifically targeted a peasant audience in an effort to democratize culture and dissolve class boundaries.

In *Drowned*, a policeman sits passively smoking his pipe and contemplates the young woman whose corpse has just been retrieved from the cold waters of the Moscow River. She may have plunged from the Karmennyi Bridge visible on the left. The towers of the Kremlin, the center of state and religious power in the Russian Empire, loom in the background shrouded in fog, suggesting the disengagement of official authority with the plight of the poor and desperate. While representing a real aspect of life in Moscow, the drowned woman appears tidily dressed and only slightly disheveled, although the actual condition of a drowned body would be far more gruesome. This suicide shows no signs of cuts, bruises, torn clothing, dislocated limbs, bloating, or blood, appearing pathetic rather than repulsive. Realist artists portraying harsh social conditions often manipulated their subject to effectively communicate their message, as Perov did here. He elicited viewer sympathy by portraying the victim with modesty and dignity. This reaction contrasts with the detached attitude of authority—represented by the Kremlin and policeman.

Male suicides were conspicuously absent from nineteenth-century pictorial imagery, although they occurred with three times greater frequency. This reflected a gap between popular perceptions and social realities. Suicide was considered deviant behavior, and men—who did most of the describing and representing—ascribed all human weaknesses to women. This perpetrated a false impression that women, especially prostitutes, had a high suicide rate. Conclusions of “scientific” psychological studies—discussed in Chapter 4 in connection with Géricault's portraits of the insane—justified such attitudes. During the 1870s, the French psychopathologist Jean Martin Charcot achieved celebrity status through his study of hystero-epilepsy, a pseudo-condition affecting mainly women. His well-attended, publicly conducted experiments at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris verified the emotional instability of young, unmarried women (an unnatural state), through the deceitful display of women trained to perform convulsions, fainting, and emotional outbursts—precisely the sort of women most likely to jump off a bridge. Charcot's research justified the demonization of poor, single women. Such research exonerated the bourgeoisie and government from responsibility for gender discrimination by classifying the problem as pathological rather than social.

By the 1880s, blame for suicide shifted from mental instability to social conditions. William Acton's 1870 study *Prostitution Considered in Its Moral, Social and Sanitary Aspects* (which demonstrated that prostitutes did not have a high suicide rate) and Émile Durkheim's landmark study *Suicide* (1897) contributed to this change of attitude. Understanding suicide as a consequence of social injustice forced the public to face the fact that suicide was a last-resort escape from a life of hardship, loneliness, and suffering. Despite the literary evidence of novels such as Gustave

Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856)—which chronicled the life of a privileged, bourgeois wife, whose boredom led her to infidelity and whose hopelessness led her to poison herself—or Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Anna Karenina* (1877)—a trophy wife whose torrid affair with the handsome Count Vronsky led to social ostracism and her suicide—women who took their own lives were most often young, single, and self-supporting. Either they tired of their lives of poverty and suffering or chose suicide as the honorable alternative to prostitution.

"One need only look at the female form to determine that she is not equipped for great intellectual or physical labor. She fulfills her obligations for living not through deeds but through suffering, through the pain of childbirth, care of the children, and subordination to man, for whom she should be a patient and cheerful companion. She should not experience great suffering, joy, and exertion; rather her life should flow more calmly, insignificantly, and gently than that of man, without being essentially happier or unhappier ... Woman's inherent duplicity arises from her lack of reason and reflection, and is still further supported by the fact that she, as the weaker sex, through her very nature does not rely on strength but on cunning: thus her instinctive slyness and persistent tendency to lie—it is as natural for her to rely on these two tendencies at every opportunity as it is for an animal, when threatened, to use its available weapons, and to feel it her right to use them. Therefore a truly honest and straightforward woman is perhaps an impossibility ... From this fundamental defect and its consequences spring falseness, unfaithfulness, treachery, ungratefulness, etc. ...

A woman should never be allowed to freely dispose of inherited wealth, such as money, estate, and property. As she always requires a guardian, she should not under any circumstances be granted guardianship of her own children. That woman by nature is intended to be obedient is evidenced by the fact that every woman placed in the unnatural position of absolute independence will at once attach herself to a man by whom she is controlled and commanded, for she needs to serve a master. If she is young, she is a lover; if she is old, a confidante."

Source: Arthur Schopenhauer, "Über die Weiber," *Parega und Paralipomena: Kleine philosophische Schriften in Sämtliche Werke*, Frankfurt: Cotta, 1965, vol. 5, pp. 668–82.

MIDDLE-CLASS WORKING WOMEN

Most peasant teenagers in the nineteenth century left their villages to relieve their families of the strain of extra mouths to feed; about 40 percent of Europeans spent some time as a domestic servant. Young women often worked in the households of the bourgeoisie. Fifty percent of London's population in 1850 consisted of servants, and in Germany in 1880, more than 20 percent of employed women were servants. Household servants had no fixed working hours, regular time off, health insurance, or job protection. The best educated became teachers, tutors (men), and governesses (women). Female teachers (and social workers) were not permitted to marry because of concern that their pregnancy would generate unwholesome thoughts in children—in the nineteenth century it was socially unacceptable for visibly pregnant women to appear in public.

Although employment as a governess was the most respectable position an unmarried, educated woman could attain, it meant virtual slavery and isolation from friends and family. Marriage was the sole means to a secure and socially acceptable



Figure 9.8

Richard Redgrave, *The Governess*, 1844. Oil on canvas, 71 × 92 cm (28 × 36 in). Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

future for nineteenth-century women. This explains the unhappy expression of the central figure in *The Governess* (1844, Figure 9.8), by Richard Redgrave (1804–88). Redgrave painted the picture one year after the establishment in 1843 of the Governesses Benevolent Institution, founded to protect governesses from physical and sexual abuse. The painting’s subtitle when shown at the 1845 Royal Academy (RA) exhibition, “She sees no kind domestic visage here,” emphasized the governess’s loneliness in a moment of grief. Redgrave represented her holding a black-edged letter typically used for announcing deaths, and she wears black, the color of mourning. Without friends or family to console her, the governess sits in the shadows, isolated from her three carefree charges, dressed in cheerful, pastel-colored dresses and bathed in daylight. While boys attended boarding schools, girls were generally educated at home. Here, their gilded prison is surrounded by a garden wall, blocking views of the world beyond. The governess teaches reading (note the book on the seated girl’s lap) and music (piano), essential skills for a marriageable middle-class woman. Governesses appear frequently in the pictorial imagery and literature of the period—for instance in Charlotte Brontë’s 1847 novel *Jane Eyre*—as emblems of the unfortunate fate of single, poor, yet well-bred women.

Emily Mary Osborn (1834–1913) shows another middle-class young woman trying to earn a living in *Nameless and Friendless* (Figure 9.9), a title indicating the difficulties facing decent, hard-working women. Lack of a wedding band on her clearly displayed left hand advertises her unmarried status, and she clutches a purse, suggesting her precarious financial situation. Has an aspiring artist brought to an art dealer a small painting that she has taken the care to frame, or is she selling family treasures in order to survive? The dealer considers the painting with a skeptical eye, intent, no doubt, on exercising his superior position in order to pay the lowest possible price for it. Osborn emphasized the woman’s inferior status—due to her gender and financial difficulty—by placing her beside an empty chair, while comfortably seated

Figure 9.9
Emily Mary Osborn,
Nameless and Friendless, 1857.
Oil on canvas, 83 × 104 cm
(32 × 41 in). Private Collection.



male clients look at drawings. They examine a print of a ballet dancer. While a ballet career usually enabled a woman to support herself, many dancers enhanced their standard of living by becoming the mistresses of affluent men—a visual clue to the moral demise threatening the young woman should she fail to sell her painting.

Osborn and Redgrave painted contemporary subjects intended to evoke a sympathetic viewer response. Their purpose differs from Daumier and Cruikshank, who intended to provoke outrage and reform. The anecdotal detail, precisely described objects, and poised, middle-class female subjects of Osborn and Redgrave conformed to Victorian norms of comportment and painterly execution. Bourgeois audiences were moved by such gentle emotional appeals without feeling threatened.

Osborn belonged to growing ranks of successful British female artists. She studied privately, and began her career as a portraitist, a typical path for woman artists. Prevented by propriety from painting landscapes outdoors, venturing into the vulgar settings where working-class and peasant genre subjects were found, or from studying the nude—a prerequisite for history painting—women artists generally focused on portraiture, still-life, and respectable scenes of bourgeois activity. Osborn's portraits and genre subjects appealed to collectors, and her works appeared regularly at RA exhibitions beginning in 1851.

POOR WORKING WOMEN

Teenage peasant girls had few employment opportunities when they came to the city. If they found a factory job alongside men, they were paid less than half the salary, which men resented because it made women more desirable workers. Equal pay for equal work was inconceivable; men were considered family breadwinners, while women (and children), were considered auxiliary earners deserving of lower wages. A

popular occupation for lower-class, uneducated women, one where there was no male competition, was a seamstress. Despite a work week of 120 hours, seamstresses, paid by the piece, lived on the edge of starvation. In highly publicized English cases of the 1840s, desperation drove them to suicide, infanticide, and prostitution. A fortunate few who could afford to pay apprentice fees could enter the better-paid professions of hat- or dressmaker.

Thomas Hood publicized the deplorable situation of seamstresses in his famous poem, “The Song of the Shirt,” which appeared in the Christmas 1843 issue of the popular periodical *Punch*:

... *Oh, Men, with Sisters dear!*
Oh, men, with Mothers and Wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch--stitch--stitch,
In poverty, hunger and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

Anna Blunden (1830–1915), a former governess, drew attention to seamstresses' plight in *The Song of the Shirt* (1854, Figure 9.10), exhibited at the Society of British Artists in 1854 and engraved for the *Penny Illustrated Paper* in 1862. Alone in her attic room, Blunden's seamstress is well-groomed and modestly dressed, making it easy for



Figure 9.10
Anna Blunden, *The Song of the Shirt*, 1854. Oil on canvas,
47 × 40 cm (18½ × 15½ in).
Yale Center for British Art,
New Haven.

viewers to identify with and pity this young woman, whose piety is demonstrated by praying hands and a gaze turned heavenward. The man's shirt she is working on symbolizes the source of her poverty and, paradoxically, her economic independence. Images of destitute and desperate women were more common in Protestant areas than in Catholic ones. This may be because Catholic women had an option unavailable to Protestants—joining a convent. This alternative was popular in France, where the number of nuns doubled between 1850 and 1880 (despite a decreasing birthrate), with nuns outnumbering priests and monks by almost four to one. More common in France than England were depictions of stoic, diligent women workers.

Although seamstresses preserved self-esteem and independence, theirs was among the worst paid occupations. Laundresses earned more. Laundering suited mothers since their small children could accompany them. It was also healthier, because it involved strenuous, outdoor labor. Like piece-work sewing, the combination of cheap labor and increasingly affluent middle classes led to increased employment in many services industries. In *The Laundress on the Quai d'Anjou* (c. 1860–61, Figure 9.11), Daumier depicted a laundress carrying a bundle of clean clothes, while helping her sturdy child—who assists by carrying the laundry paddle—up the steps of the Quai d'Anjou on Paris's Ile St Louis. This robust, hardworking mother appears neither pathetic nor scruffy. However, by silhouetting her against the fashionable apartment buildings near the Paris City Hall, Daumier intimated that her lot was gloomier than that of inhabitants across the Seine River. In the spirit of French social Realism,

Figure 9.11

Honoré Daumier, *The Laundress on the Quai d'Anjou*, c. 1860–61. Oil on canvas, 49 × 34 cm (19¼ × 13¼ in). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Daumier presented an ordinary episode in the life of a working-class woman without the sentimentality found in Victorian Realists like Redgrave and Blunden. Like Meissonier, Daumier was self-taught as a painter, but only rarely submitted works to the Salon. *Laundress*, like most of Daumier's paintings, was never exhibited during his lifetime.

PROSTITUTION

More than half of prostitutes came from the clothing trades, particularly seamstresses and laundresses. Since wages for working women were often insufficient for survival, many turned to prostitution to supplement their income, including wives with husbands and children. Young women with no skills who could not find work upon their arrival in cities, often turned to prostitution as well. There were more women engaged in prostitution in the nineteenth century than in any other occupation, except for domestic service, and there, sexual liberties were often taken by masters with their female servants.

The prevalence of extramarital sex during the nineteenth century meant that syphilis was rampant, and it was frequently fatal. According to a contemporary survey, 30–50 percent of European soldiers were infected, but they were not alone—author Gustave Flaubert and artists Édouard Manet, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent van Gogh were among those afflicted by what Erasmus of Rotterdam called the “new plague” in his 1529 “Oration in Praise of the Art of Medicine.” Significantly, men were never inspected or incarcerated in a “hospital” to prevent their spreading the disease, as were women in England under the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869. Among the aristocracy, extramarital sexual partners in the form of mistresses had always been common, but in the nineteenth century, several factors combined to make prostitution the century's fastest growing profession. These include: taboos against unnecessary contact between husbands and wives, the belief that masturbation resulted in mental and physical disease, the belief that a woman's physical satisfaction derived from raising her children and managing her household, the desire to emulate aristocratic behavior as a symbol of status, and a workforce flooded with underpaid women. Approximately 30 percent of Paris's unregistered prostitutes in 1880 were unwed mothers, victims of sexual exploitation by employers while working as domestic servants. While prostitutes were stigmatized by the hypocritical bourgeoisie—the main source of clients—among the working classes, prostitutes were accepted for what they were—women forced into a degrading occupation to survive. Contrary to lies perpetrated by journalism, religion, and science about the inherent degeneracy of lower-class women, who were perceived as immoral, jealous, self-indulgent destroyers of families and society, most prostitutes catering to the middle and working classes, “retired” by their late twenties, often marrying working-class men.

Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine (1856–57, Figure 9.12) by Gustave Courbet (1819–77) highlighted the prevalence of prostitution in mid nineteenth-century Paris. Courbet studied art in his native Ornans, moving to Paris in 1839. Dissatisfied with the teaching at the École des Beaux Arts, Courbet studied at the Academie Suisse and independently at the Louvre. One of the most abrasive and innovative artists of his generation, Courbet aroused controversy at the Salons and mounted a sensational independent exhibition in a pavilion adjacent to the exhibition grounds of the 1855 Exposition universelle (world's fair). A zealous Republican, Courbet fled

Figure 9.12

Gustave Courbet, *Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine*, 1856–57. Oil on canvas, 174 × 206 cm (5 ft 8 in × 6 ft 6 in). Musée du Petit Palais, Paris.



to Switzerland in 1873 to avoid prosecution for his participation in the Commune government, which kept essential services going in Paris following France's 1871 defeat in the Franco-Prussian War.

The size of *Young Ladies* typified history painting. Representing the sleazy side of French society on this scale and displaying it at the Salon transgressed the boundaries of propriety. Not content to insult conventional morality, Courbet (who could bypass the jury due to winning a medal at the 1849 Salon) originally chose an equally impudent title, “Two Fashionable Young Women During the Second Empire.” The title was technically accurate—these women were young and fashionable (high-class prostitutes were widely imitated trendsetters) and they did live during the Second Empire (1851–70). Yet, by cynically referring to these women as “ladies” and linking them to the Second Empire of Napoleon III (who had numerous mistresses), Courbet exposed the hypocrisy of France's ruling class, which condemned prostitution at the same time as it sustained it economically and controlled it legally. Still, Courbet's public would have been even more outraged had he titled it more straightforwardly “Prostitutes on the Banks of the Seine.” Courbet antagonized both authorities and salon-goers, who condemned *Young Ladies* as immoral.

Although prostitution is an active, physical occupation, Courbet's “young ladies” recline passively as if in an out-of-doors harem—a kind of *Women of Algiers* (Figure 6.16) transported to the Paris suburbs. Here, however, Courbet reshaped the distant fantasy of erotically charged, available women into a modern reality. While she may appear dressed to us, the woman in white relaxes in her corset and undergarments, her dress piled under her head and serving as a pillow. She gazes at the viewer with a sultry and inviting expression, acknowledging our presence in this depraved scene. The positions of her hands appear as slightly relaxed versions of those practiced by ballet dancers—perhaps these women have retired from the grueling life of dance

with the financial support of a wealthy gentleman friend. Are we that gentleman? Is that our silk top hat in the row boat docked at the shore?

Perhaps more offensive was Courbet's parody of urbanites' craving for nature, the craving that transformed Fontainebleau Forest into a weekend holiday-destination in the 1830s. Courbet pictured urban vice oozing, like a virus, beyond city limits to taint the countryside. In *Young Ladies*, nature is lush and abundant—the lawn a rich green carpet, the trees thick with leaves, and the fields filled with flowers, implied by the wildflower bouquet held by the clothed woman. Courbet's corrupt vision contrasts with Hunt's optimistic message in *The Awakening Conscience* (Figure 7.17) that nature could rouse the moral sense of wayward urban women. In his candid rendering of working girls, Courbet refused to convey an uplifting message, but adhered to his mission of documenting contemporary life. In an 1861 letter published in the newspaper *Le Courrier du dimanche*, Courbet asserted, "Historical art is by nature contemporary. Each era must have its artists who express it and reproduce it for the future" (Courbet 2007: 450). While Courbet's rejection of academic principles seems rational, Courbet often purposely undermined conventional expectations and values, provoking public outrage.

Christian Krohg (1852–1925) expressed indignation over the exploitation of women in *Albertine in the Police Doctor's Waiting Room* (Figure 9.13). *Albertine* debuted in March 1887 in a rented space in a working-class neighborhood instead of an art gallery, evidencing Krohg's working-class solidarity. The exhibition was timed to coincide with a court decision banning Krohg's book, *Albertine* (1886) on grounds of obscenity. The events in Krohg's novel were not obscene, but the misuse of power by the men Krohg described, were. *Albertine* tells the story of a peasant girl who came to Christiania (changed to Oslo, the original name, in 1925) to earn her living as a seamstress. Naïve and poverty-stricken, Albertine was lured into prostitution by a dishonest policeman. Krohg's painting records the moment when Albertine, her head bowed in modesty or shame and still dressed in her peasant attire, is about to enter the examination room of the public health office. Pelvic examinations of prostitutes were instituted in major cities beginning in the mid-nineteenth century to hinder the spread of venereal disease, a mission they did not accomplish, since men



For scholarly interpretations of the significance of undress in *Young Ladies* go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos



Figure 9.13

Christian Krohg, *Albertine in the Police Doctor's Waiting Room*, 1885–87. Oil on canvas, 211 × 326 cm (6 ft 11 in × 10 ft 8 3/8 in). The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.

were the primary carriers. Police doctors were always male, superior in gender as well as in social and economic status, and often misused their position to humiliate and abuse their “patients.”

Krohg’s novel and painting accurately portrayed an immoral aspect of modern life. While Albertine stands on the brink of degradation (and death, in Krohg’s novel), the peasant girl standing on a bench at the back of the room and gazing out the window may be spared. Striking a strained posture reminiscent of the woman in Hunt’s *Awakening Conscience*, this girl, aloof from, and literally above, the room’s other occupants, may “see the light.” This is certainly not the case with the self-assured and fashionably dressed others, however. In an aggressive acknowledgement of the viewer, the blue-gloved woman in the center meets our gaze with a knowing look. A hardened professional, she represents Albertine’s future.

Although he completed a law degree, Krohg pursued painting, and took art courses while in law school. In 1871, he studied art full-time at the academy in Karlsruhe, Germany, and followed his teacher, Karl Gussow (1843–1907), to Berlin in 1875, continuing his studies at the academy there. In Berlin, Krohg lived in poverty, a situation that heightened his social awareness and his determination to commemorate the lives of common people, whose daily struggle seemed every bit as heroic as historical figures.

Alfred Fournier, professor of syphilology, declared: “syphilis can, because of its hereditary consequences, debase and corrupt the species by producing inferior, decadent, dystrophic, and deficient beings” (Fournier 1881). Syphilis, he claimed, caused alcoholism, epilepsy, insanity, and prostitution. This hypothesis seems verified by the harsh vision of the medical regulation of prostitutes in *Rue des Moulins* (1894, Figure 9.14) by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901). An aristocrat, Lautrec studied art privately, and his financial independence gave him freedom. A misfit due to his physical deformity (the result of birth defects—his parents were first cousins), Lautrec was attracted to marginal figures in the entertainment world. His portrayals were shown at numerous alternative exhibitions and purchased by eager collectors.

While less realistic than *Albertine* in terms of its anecdotal detail and degree of finish, *The Inspection*’s dispassionate presentation of the indignities lying beyond the waiting room door is more realistic in terms of its gritty confrontation with the facts. Lautrec avoided sentiment and compassion for these two prostitutes awaiting examination in the very brothel where they worked. The older, lumpier prostitute stares resignedly into space, while the younger redhead shoots a self-assured glance at the viewer. This exclusive space is inhabited by male officials (police, doctors) and women (prostitutes)—not spectators, not us, not Lautrec. Lautrec eliminated the customary distance between viewer and viewed by implying that *we* are either a prostitute (if female) or a doctor or police official (if male). Typical of artists belonging to the post-Impressionist generation (Chapter 12), Lautrec used non-traditional materials—pastel on cardboard—and distorted color, form, and texture to convey the aberrant life of this pair of callous prostitutes. They wait apathetically for a vaginal exam administered by a public health official, an ordeal most women would have found demeaning. Although Lautrec presented an intimate view of society’s victims, he refrained from arousing either compassion or contempt.

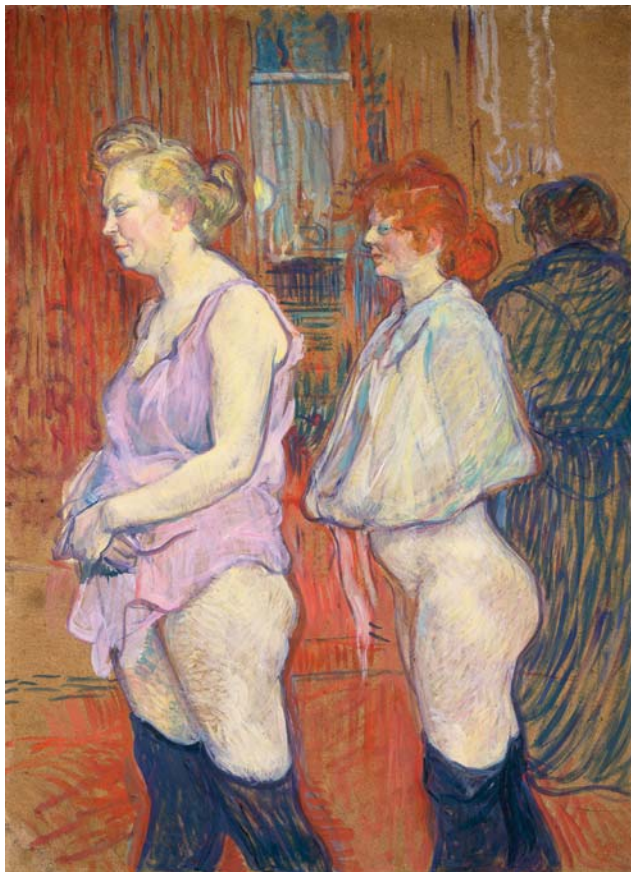


Figure 9.14
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec,
Rue des Moulins, 1894. Oil on
cardboard on wood, 84 × 61
cm (32½ × 24½ in). National
Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

DOCUMENTING WORK

Thomas Eakins's *The Gross Clinic* (1875, Figure 9.15) represents a kind of synthesis of Wright of Derby's *Experiment on a Bird in the Air-Pump* (Figure 1.8) and West's *Death of Wolfe* (Figure 3.1); it is a group portrait documenting a scientific event. Like Wright, Eakins (1844–1916) utilized the dramatic contrasts of artificial light to intensify emotional drama; here, however, the life of a human rather than a bird hangs in the balance. Eakins sketched during surgeries performed by Dr Samuel Gross at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, where Eakins took medical courses, and included a self-portrait-as-onlooker in the doorway to the far right. Gross's illuminated forehead, concentrated expression, and placement near the center of the painting emphasize his importance. Some viewers were awed by the painting's sublime character; others were horrified by its gross display of blood. Despite its innovative character (the first "live" painting of a surgery), *Gross Clinic* perpetuates conventional gender stereotypes by the focused work of the men, and the emotional horror of the lone female on the left. Jefferson's alumni association purchased the painting in 1878, and it has hung at Jefferson ever since. A passionate Realist, Eakins studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, at Jefferson (he considered a career in medicine), and in Paris from 1866 to 1869 at the École des Beaux-Arts with Jean-Léon Gérôme. Eakins taught at the Pennsylvania Academy beginning in 1876 and became director in 1882. He encouraged working from life and painting in color without the usual academic preparation of studying classical sculpture and mastering drawing, and also promoted

Figure 9.15

Thomas Eakins, *The Gross Clinic*, 1875. Oil on canvas, 244 × 198 cm (8 ft × 6 ft 6 in). The Philadelphia Museum of Art.



photography as an aide. Eakins's unconventional methods resulted in his resignation in 1886 following a controversy over his permitting a mixed gender class to draw from a nude male model.

IDEALIZED LABOR

Ford Maddox Brown (1821–93) presented an idealized vision of work as ennobling, healthful, and productive in *Work* (Figure 9.16). Here, a broad range of workers and non-workers populate a London governed by a stable social hierarchy and division of labor. Brown studied at the art academy in Antwerp and worked in Paris and Italy before settling in England in 1848. One of his first pupils in London was Rossetti; Brown became closely associated with, and influenced by, the Pre-Raphaelites. Brown's Victorian Realism captured minute details of activity, dress, physiognomy, and setting, and is social Realism insofar as the artist included the laboring poor among a broad spectrum of contemporary Londoners in this scene set on Heath Street, Hampstead. Brown's social vision was influenced by Thomas Carlyle, the balding gentleman standing to the right. In *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle lamented the deterioration of British society due to alienation, egotism, and materialism, a predicament suggested by the poster exclaiming “Money!! Money!! Money!!” on the left wall. Instead, Carlyle wished for “the man who sings at his work”—a fellow Brown portrays near the painting's center. The centrality of labor as part of a divine order is suggested by the biblical quotations on the painting's frame: “Seest thou a man diligent in his business,



Figure 9.16
Ford Madox Brown, *Work*,
1852–65. Oil on canvas,
arched top, 137 × 197 cm
(4 ft 6 in × 6 ft 6 in).
Manchester Art Gallery.

He shall stand before kings” and “In the sweat of the face shalt thou eat bread.” At the painting’s center, a pair of ditch diggers exemplifies the virility, strength, and diligence forming the foundation of an ethical and efficient society where people live and work under humane conditions and take pride in their labor. Beside Carlyle stands Reverend John Maurice, a social activist who established educational institutes for the working classes—these men represent the moral and intellectual leadership of social reform. Flanking the ditch diggers are three women: a ragged, barefoot flower vendor and two middle-class women, one of whom distributes temperance leaflets. Among the exhaustive array of narrative details lurk also the targets of social reform: the idle rich, a drinking worker, a negligent mother, and, in the right background, naïve and/or financially needy men with red placards campaigning for a corrupt politician. Brown showed people requiring salvation, as well as those forming the backbone of Britain’s future, in an optimistic and intricately woven narrative corresponding to Carlyle’s belief that “all human interests, combined human endeavors, and social growth in this world, have, at a certain stage of their development, required organizing; and Work, the grandest of human interests, does now require it” (Carlyle 1918: 318).

Adolf von Menzel (1815–1905) worked in his father’s lithography shop, began publishing illustrations at the age of 14, and took over the business when his father died in 1832, two years after it had relocated to Berlin from Prussian-controlled Wroclaw, Poland. The most famous German artist in the second half of the nineteenth century, Menzel began painting in 1837, became a professor at the Berlin Academy in 1856, and produced illustrations throughout his career.

Iron Rolling Mill (Figure 9.17)—completed in 1875 and shown at the Paris Exposition universelle of 1878—took Menzel three years to paint. It faithfully described the interior of Silesia’s largest foundry, near Katowice. The result of an 1871 merger between the state-owned Königshütte and the privately owned Laurahütte factories, the foundry demonstrated the increasing cooperation between the state and private sectors. Three thousand workers manned more than 100 furnaces and produced more than 100,000 tons of iron and steel annually for German railways. The painting’s

Figure 9.17

Adolph von Menzel, *Iron Rolling Mill*, 1875. Oil on canvas, 158 × 254 cm (5 ft 2 in × 8 ft 4 in). Nationalgalerie, Berlin.



monumental scale (more than eight feet long and five feet wide) mirrored the colossal scale of his subject and Menzel's judgment that German industry deserved a history-sized painting. Menzel visited the factory in 1872 and made more than 100 sketches, which he used, in accordance with academic practice, to design his painting. Menzel showed workers engaged in a variety of activities—removing water-cooled rails with giant pincers, washing before returning home—and in one of the first depictions of shift labor, Menzel portrayed workers with dispassionate accuracy, neither idealized nor degraded. The dynamism of the mill, where individuals joined forces to fabricate the infrastructure of a modern, united (since 1870) Germany, can be interpreted as an optimistic allegory of the nation's future. Menzel's uncle, a wealthy banker—the kind of man who provided the loans that fueled Germany's industrial boom—purchased the painting, but within a year he went bankrupt and sold *Iron Rolling Mill* to Berlin's Nationalgalerie for three times the original purchase price. The museum's director, Max Jordan, declared that *Iron Rolling Mill* equaled “the most grandiose contemporary history paintings in its moral force” (Menzel 1996: 384).

In the nineteenth century, nations believed their vitality depended on the vitality of its citizens and industry. For this reason, health and hygiene assumed political significance, as did invention, productivity, and technology. The breakneck speed of Germany's industrialization in the late nineteenth century signaled triumph over the debilitating consequences of Napoleonic occupation earlier in the century. A three-fold increase in navigable waterways by 1850, the paving of roads—from 4,000 kilometers in 1815 to 53,000 in 1850—and the building of railroads—from six kilometers in 1835 to 18,870 in 1870—sparked an industrial boom: between 1850 and 1870, the production of pig-iron (used to manufacture rails) increased sevenfold and the size of factories, eightfold.

In 1885, *The Hammerer* (Figure 9.18) by Constantin Meunier (1831–1905) attracted positive critical attention at the Salon. Designed for an enormous monument to labor, *Hammerer* expresses a dignity usually reserved for military and political leaders. This hero of modern industry appears in his protective leather hat, boots, and apron, enjoying a rest from his strenuous work at the iron mill. Like Menzel, Meunier wanted to celebrate the workers who made economic prosperity possible.



For an explanation of the significance of *Iron Rolling Mill* to a newly united Germany see www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos



Figure 9.18
Constantin Meunier, *The Hammerer*, c. 1885. Bronze, life-size. Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels.

Meunier studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels from 1845 to 1852, but abandoned it for painting, a medium with broader market appeal and one freed from the expenses of foundries and assistants. After 25 unremarkable years as a religious painter, Meunier returned to sculpture following a visit to the Belgian coal mining region near Frameries, which he made in connection with a book illustration project. In 1884 he submitted five worker sculptures in wax to the Les XX exhibition (Chapter 14) in Brussels. These were popular, and produced in life-size versions suitable for public monuments as well as in table-top editions. Meunier taught at the art academy in Leuven and was elected to Belgium's Royal Academy. Art dealer Siegfried Bing held a well-attended exhibition of Meunier's work at his Paris gallery in 1896, and in 1899, Meunier was one of several foreign artists invited to participate in the third Vienna Secession exhibition.

OPPRESSED WORKERS

Although he began as an icon painter (the most secure living for painters in Orthodox Christian societies), Ilya Repin (1844–1930) moved from his native Ukraine to St Petersburg in 1863, studying first with Ivan Kramskoy (Figure 10.6) at the Society for the Encouragement of Artists (established by The Wanderers), and then at the Academy of Art from 1864 to 1871. In St Petersburg, Repin associated with

Figure 9.19

Ilya Repin, *Bargehaulers on the Volga*, 1873. Oil on canvas, 132 × 281 cm (4 ft 4 in × 9 ft 3 in). Russian State Museum, St Petersburg, Russia.



progressive artists, musicians, and writers dedicated to democratic individualism, anti-authoritarian anarchism, and cooperative socialism. Repin (like Meissonier) painted traditional academic subjects as well as Realist scenes of everyday life, including ones that revealed the dignity and integrity of Russia's wage laborers. *Bargehaulers on the Volga* (1873, Figure 9.19) records a typical scene from the life of former serfs, now "free" to earn their living on the open market following "liberation" in 1861 (80 years later than Austria). After centuries of a feudal system under which serfs were the property of those owning the land on which they lived, most peasants were cut loose to fend for themselves without education, training, or land. Motivated partly by a desire to make Russian agriculture more competitive on the world market, Alexander II actually liberated the landowning aristocracy from their responsibility for insuring the welfare of their laborers. Thirty thousand nobles now owned 43 percent of the land, with 20 million illiterate serfs awarded the rest. Another incentive was a desire to compete with industrializing nations whose economies depended on an abundance of cheap labor (i.e., desperate individuals struggling for survival); Tsar Alexander II's proclamation unleashed a flood of destitute, unskilled peasants, willing to work for wages lower than the cost of maintaining workhorses and oxen.

Here, Repin represented 11 unique individuals, each relegated by fate to the same miserable lot. Although doomed to a common fate, these men from diverse backgrounds display very different responses, indicated by their posture and expression. By dignifying them with such careful attention, Repin indicated their human worth at a time when the ruling classes assumed that social status reflected innate moral and intellectual qualities; he forced viewers to reckon with these men as individuals. Repin's portrayal of Russia's underclass showed how heterogeneous it was and suggested life's unpredictability. Beginning with the dark-haired leader, Repin included portraits of: a robust peasant, a defrocked priest, a lazy pipe smoker, a sailor, a resistant boy, a tired old man, a former soldier, a Siberian tribesman, a Greek, and one unidentified figure. Their physical and psychological singularity evidenced a new, modern attitude toward the individual.

REFORMING THE POOR

The destitute inmates of a crowded London homeless shelter sacrifice their independence and self-respect in their struggle for survival (1872, Figure 9.20). Packed into what appears to be one gigantic bed like so many sardines in a tin, men and

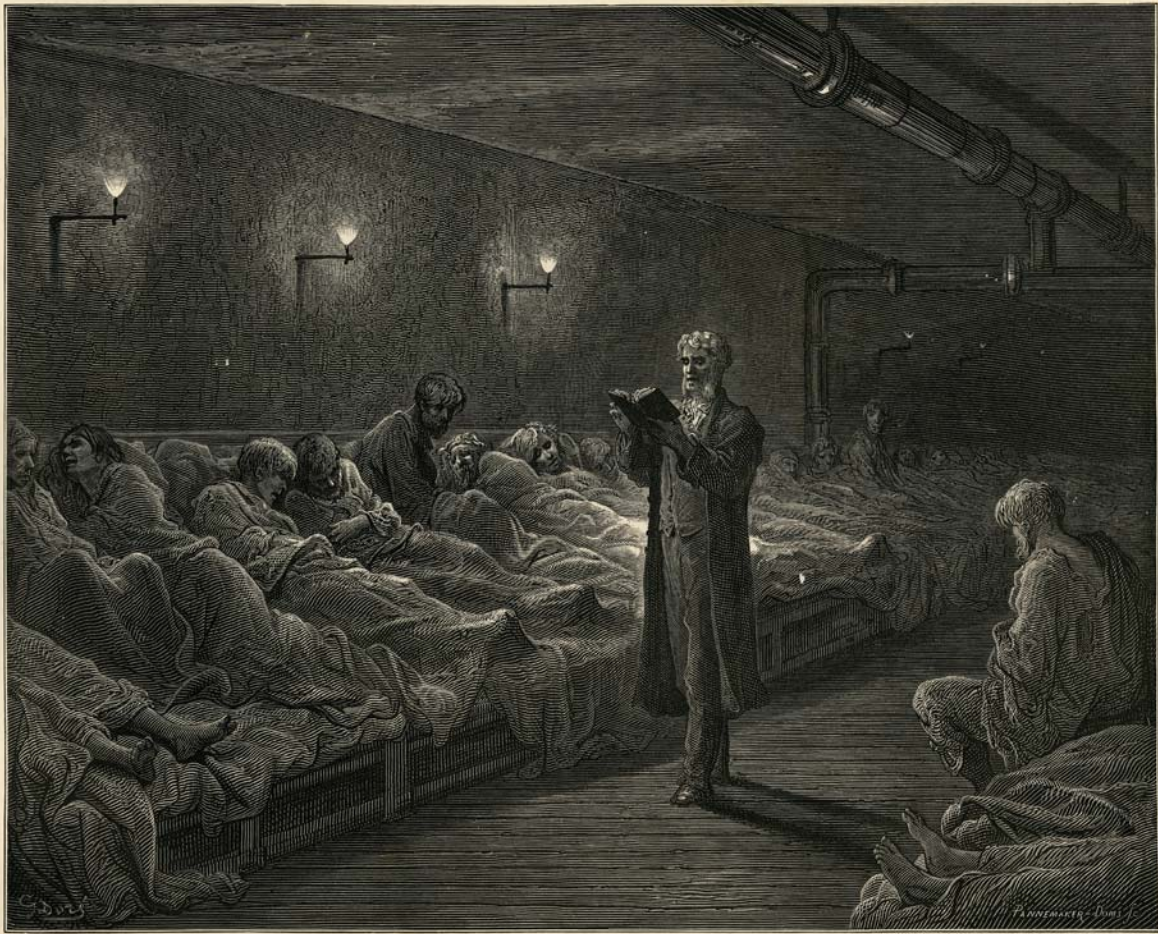


Figure 9.20

Gustave Doré, *Scripture Reader in a Night Refuge*, from *London: A Pilgrimage*. Engraving. 1872. Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, IN

women, family and strangers, sick and healthy, settle in for the night, as a well-dressed and clean-shaven official reads to them from the Bible. *Scripture Reader in a Night Refuge*, one of Gustave Doré's engraved illustrations to his 1872 publication, *London: A Pilgrimage*, documented the notion of moral improvement that played a crucial role in nineteenth-century approaches to pauperism. Ever since Robert Malthus advanced the idea that poverty was the fault of the poor in *Essay on Population* (1798), many agreed that the poor's lack of self-control led to the production of large families they could not feed. Because piety encouraged chastity and restraint, altruistic individuals and organizations evangelized in hopes of guiding the poor toward the path to moral and economic progress. In a June 1882 letter to his brother Theo, Vincent van Gogh complained that poverty prevented his buying *London: A Pilgrimage*. Doré's book may have reminded him of his own efforts to bring comfort and religion to the poor of Boringe, Belgium (Gogh 1996: 168). For viewers skeptical about the power of piety to ameliorate economic and social conditions there is an ironic discrepancy between what the homeless needed—secure jobs at survivable wages—and what they received.

CONCLUSION

The conviction that art could foster social and political change inspired increasing numbers of artists in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Paintings, prints, and sculptures portrayed the ghastly and unnecessary living and working conditions of the urban lower classes for a more fortunate, affluent audience. The emotional tone of these images could be sentimental, straightforward, condescending, or ennobling, depending on the artist's own attitudes and the reaction (s)he sought to evoke in her/his audience. Likewise, viewer reactions could vary and were not always predictable: some responded with a feeling of superiority; others, with pity; and some were roused to social activism. One must be careful in using images (or texts) to understand the realities of the period, since the numbers of certain types of images bear no relationship to the frequency of the situations they portray, as is the case of women leaping from bridges. What these images do reveal, though, is the intensifying interest of artists in portraying the appearance of their time, which was changing at an unsettling pace. Two themes—conditions of common people in a transient, unstable world, and reforming a world gone awry—preoccupied many artists, and their public, in the final decades of the nineteenth century.



For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter and to see how Lautrec's rue des Moulins brothel looks today go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.

Imagined Communities: Views of Peasant Life

The rise of peasant painting in the mid-nineteenth century coincided with and reflected social transformation. Economic, political, and technological factors led to more land coming under cultivation, productivity increasing, and peasants migrating by the millions from their native villages. During this period, land ownership in continental Europe changed in many places. For centuries, the church and nobility owned most farmland, but following legislation throughout Europe at various times during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was owned increasingly by families like the Constables, Courbets, and Millets, who became wealthy by acquiring enough land to produce a surplus beyond their personal needs. Most peasants worked as paid laborers and/or rented small plots of land barely sufficient to provide for their survival in good times. The demise of feudalism meant the end of benign paternalism, under which landowners assumed responsibility for the welfare of the peasants living on their property. Literally overnight in many cases, millions were left to fend for themselves without necessary resources—no food, no home, no land, no money, no work. In Sweden, for instance, the number of land-owning peasants increased ten percent between 1750 and 1850, but the number of landless peasants increased 400 percent. In addition to the social unrest discussed in Chapter 9, peasant riots occurred (England 1830, Poland 1846, Russia 1856), throughout Europe in 1848 (after years of drought and bad harvests), and again in the wake of depressions in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Abolition of serfdom—in Austria in 1848 and Russia in 1861—meant that suddenly tens of millions of peasants lost their guarantee of food, shelter, and survival.

Instead of farming land in order to provide food for those living in the immediate vicinity, as had been the practice for centuries, agriculture in the nineteenth century became commercialized, benefitting only large landholders. Commercialized agriculture lowered living standards for subsistence farmers and laborers, because a population explosion depressed wages. Increased land productivity benefitted mainly large landholders. Enhanced productivity was due to new agricultural practices, especially crop rotation (instead of leaving some fields fallow in order for their nutrient levels to recover). Monoculture (the growing of a single crop), combined with the planting of hardier and less labor-intensive crops, replaced the age-old practice of cultivating a range of grains, livestock, and vegetables. Consequently, farmers

"As long as men were content with their rustic huts, as long as they were limited to sewing their clothing of skins with thorn or fish bones, adorning themselves with feathers and shells, painting their bodies with various colors, perfecting or embellishing their bows and arrows, carving with sharp stones a few fishing Canoes or a few crude Musical instruments; in a word, as long as they applied themselves only to tasks that a single person could do and to arts that did not require the cooperation of several hands, they lived free, healthy, good, and happy insofar as they could be according to their Nature, and they continued to enjoy among themselves the sweetness of independent intercourse. But from the moment one man needed the help of another, as soon as they observed that it was useful for a single person to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, labor became necessary; and vast forests were changed into smiling Fields which had to be watered with the sweat of men, and in which slavery and misery were soon seen to germinate and grow with the crops."

Source: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origins of Inequality" (1754), in John Zerzan, ed., *Against Civilization: Readings and Reflections*, Los Angeles, CA: Feral House, 2005, pp. 23–4.

needed to sell most or all of their production to purchase necessities. Independence and security were traded for dependence on an unstable market. Agricultural trade increased rapidly, aided by improved transportation—paved roadways, trains, and steam ships. Russia, for instance, exported about 11,500 tons of grain in 1850, but almost 90,000 by 1880, while the United States's grain exports increased twenty-fold during the same period.

The amount of land under cultivation also increased—again, a benefit mainly to large landowners. Prussian peasants, for instance, lost 25 percent of their land to large landholders during the nineteenth century. During the period 1840 to 1880, farmland in Russia and Germany increased by 30 percent, in Italy and Denmark by 50 percent, and in the United States it tripled. Forests and woodlands were razed throughout Europe and fields planted; in this process, one third of Italy's forests were destroyed between 1850 and 1900. Land reforms drastically changed the landscape and the lives of the people trying to live on it. The sheer scale of this transformation meant that it had repercussions for all of society, and focused attention on the countryside to an unprecedented degree.

PEASANT IDENTITY

By the 1840s and until the end of the century, peasant painting was widespread throughout the Western world, and expressed a wide range of ideas. Two concerns especially motivated the documentation of peasants: awareness of a vanishing way of life and a desire to document it, and sympathy for the hardships accompanying land reform, mechanization, and demographic change. These motives combined with dissatisfaction regarding changes in morality and social relations wrought by industrialization and urbanization and a belief in peasants' superiority because of their presumed altruism, honesty, simplicity, and even racial purity. Peasant behavior and values offered models of virtuous behavior for audiences just as episodes from ancient history had earlier. Peasant imagery reminded contemporaries of escalating tensions between center and periphery, a situation particularly acute in France, where provinces resented the dominance of Paris. Finally, just as urbanites

projected onto the rural landscape an identity diametrically opposed to the city, so too they projected onto its peasantry an identity antithetical to that of urbanites. If city folk were alienated, corrupt, nervous, and sickly, then peasants were united, honest, relaxed, and healthy. Just as ignorance allowed Westerners to project a fantasy image onto “Orientals,” it permitted urbanites to envision peasants as idealized versions of themselves.

PEASANT IMAGERY BEFORE 1848

Before 1840, when most Europeans and North Americans lived in the countryside, images of peasants tended to be either dramatic or sentimental—characters with whom affluent and urban viewers could vicariously identify and who posed no serious threat to social stability. Typical of the sentimental genre was Edwin Landseer’s *The Old Shepherd’s Chief Mourner* (1837, Figure 10.1), whose title conveyed the lonely life of the shepherd, days spent alone, guiding his flock to fertile pastures. The dog appears to be not only his chief, but his only, mourner. Critically acclaimed at the Royal Academy (RA) exhibition of 1837, *The Old Shepherd’s Chief Mourner* was engraved and sold in an inexpensive print edition the following year.

Landseer arranged objects to evoke maximum pathos. The loyal dog rests his chin on his master’s coffin, just as he had rested it many an evening on his master’s knee as the old man sat in the wooden armchair in the background. An almost mystical light emanates from the hidden window above the chair, emphasizing the absence of the deceased shepherd in body, but his presence in spirit. The elderly shepherd’s ram’s horn, used for calling sheep, lies in the foreground, along with his walking stick and tam o’shanter; the swathe of tartan over the coffin identifying the deceased as a Scotsman. The fallen rafter on the right indicates neglect. No one has helped the infirm old man repair his home, and it seems that his coffin may have been lying there for days or weeks—perhaps through the winter when the ground was too



Figure 10.1

Edwin Landseer, *The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner*, 1837. Oil on canvas 46 × 61 cm (18 × 24 in). Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

frozen to dig a grave. Although Landseer set his scene far from the drawing rooms of his London audience, the experience of loneliness and abandonment in an era of unsettling demographic and economic change was one with which many urbanites could identify. For the millions forced to migrate from the countryside, the secure and familiar world of village life lay also, at least metaphorically, in ruins.

COURBET'S BURIAL: MORE THAN JUST A FUNERAL

At the 1851 Salon, Gustave Courbet shocked the Parisian art world by exhibiting an unusually huge genre painting. In it, Courbet addressed social and religious issues in a manner different from Hunt's near contemporary *Hireling Shepherd* (Figure 7.16). *Burial at Ornans* (1849–50, Figure 10.2) responded to the call by Courbet's friend, critic and poet Charles Baudelaire, for modern art in his 1846 Salon review. At the same time, *Burial*'s enormous scale advertised an anti-authoritarian message that challenged the French Académie and the supremacy of Paris over the provinces. Like Géricault's 1819 Salon entry *Raft of the Medusa* (Figure 3.11), *Burial at Ornans* transgressed boundaries of propriety upheld by Salon juries. Particularly defiant was Courbet's submission of *Burial* as a history painting, despite its genre subject. In a way perhaps invisible to Courbet's Parisian audience, however, it was.

As with Géricault's *Wounded Cuirassier* (Figure 3.10), contemporary audiences disliked Courbet's vague title, which did not provide adequate justification for *Burial*'s consideration as history painting. This enormous painting surely must depict the funeral of an important person. But whose? Courbet withheld the deceased's identity, but provided enough clues for modern scholars to figure out that *Burial* represented the funeral of his great-uncle, the first person buried in the new Ornans cemetery. The two red-hatted town officials signaled the civic importance of the cemetery's inauguration, a historic event in local terms. The opening of this cemetery marked the capitulation after three decades of resistance to a law passed by the national government in 1808 that required interment outside city limits for hygienic reasons. *Burial* testified to the weak sense of national identity in France. With its broad range

Figure 10.2

Gustave Courbet, *Burial at Ornans*, 1849–50. Oil on canvas, 315 × 668 cm (10 ft 4 in × 21 ft 11 in). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



of linguistic and cultural groups, from the Celtic-speaking Bretons in the north to the Provençal-speakers in the south, most of France's citizens learned French as a second language, if they learned it at all. Ornans, near the Swiss border, typified French towns in its reluctance to take orders from Paris. To Ornans's inhabitants, Paris was a large city in the north that had no right to change local tradition. Local and regional identities were stronger than national identities in the mid-nineteenth century, and provincial values and ways of life were considered more authentic, natural, and valid than urban ones.

In scale, *Burial* (10 × 21 feet; 3 × 6.5 meters) compared to Géricault's *Raft* (16 × 23 feet; 5 × 7 meters). By exhibiting a large-scale genre painting, Courbet demanded an inappropriate amount of attention for an anonymous event. Had he clarified the historical significance of *Burial* or painted it on a much smaller scale (like Meissonier's *Memory of Civil War*, Figure 9.2), Courbet might have avoided controversy. And Courbet knew this. Courbet divided his canvas into three parts, reminiscent of a triptych altarpiece and elevating his "history painting" by encouraging an association with sacred images. The three groups inhabiting these spaces—Roman Catholic clerics on the left, prominent town officials in the center (including the mayor and justice of the peace), and grieving local women on the right—are portraits of Ornans inhabitants, including his parents and sisters. This fact allies *Burial* with group portraiture but, again, the anonymity of the figures violated the cardinal rule of portraiture.

According to Courbet's letters from that time, everyone in town wanted to be included. The equality with which Courbet presented the townspeople posed a further problem because these groups had unequal social status. Civil and religious officials were accorded equal prominence at a contentious moment in France's history—the secular Second Republic had only recently replaced (in December 1848) the July Monarchy with its strong affiliation to the Roman Catholic Church. Equally provocative, women occupied a comparable space in the scene despite their inferior status. By representing with equal attention and dignity bureaucrats, clerics, and disenfranchised women, Courbet declared his egalitarian (Republican) political position. In a letter to his patron Alfred Bruyas, Courbet declared: "*Burial* ... was my beginning and my statement of principles" (Bowness 1977: 124). *Burial* announced Courbet's hostility to central authority and his commitment to celebrate the life and landscape of his ancestral village.

ACADEMICALLY ACCEPTABLE PEASANT IMAGES

Not only were bourgeois Parisians annoyed by the attention demanded by Courbet's trivial subject, which usurped a large space at the Salon, but they were disgusted by the crude and ruddy features of this motley assortment of country bumpkins, just as London audiences had been by Hunt's *Hireling Shepherd*. Portraits were commonly included in large-scale history paintings (for example, West's *Death of Wolfe*, Figure 3.1), but Courbet's more than 50 portraits of Ornans villagers transgressed contemporary norms. Expectations for peasant subjects were respected by Léopold Robert (1794–1835), one of the most successful French peasant painters during the first half of the nineteenth century. Robert began painting rural types during the 1820s, the decade when Corot and his colleagues established an artists' colony in the Fontainebleau Forest and Parisians began making weekend excursions there to escape from the noise and filth of the city. After studying with David for three years

(1812–15), Robert returned first to his native Switzerland then moved to Rome in 1818, where he produced a steady stream of paintings depicting peasants and outlaws. By popular request, Robert produced 14 versions of *The Brigand Asleep* (1826, Figure 10.3). Artists working in Rome were fascinated by the outlaws who harassed travelers between Rome and Naples. When a government crackdown evacuated the outlaw stronghold of Sonnino and incarcerated its inhabitants in the Baths of Diocletian, Robert spent two months during the summer of 1819 studying them, just as Barye and Delacroix studied animals in the zoo (Chapter 4).

Why were collectors eager to buy this painting? Compared to the craggy, blemished features of Courbet's peasants, Robert presented a handsome couple, apparently clean, healthy, physically fit, and mentally alert—an image of the ideal but lost qualities mourned by the bourgeoisie. The combination of a brushless, highly detailed (academic) technique with a dramatic moment, animated and romanticized the daring adventures of popular literature—such as Friedrich von Schiller's 1781 play *The Robbers* and Sir Walter Scott's novel *Ivanhoe* (1819), both stories about noble, young outlaws who rejected the corrupt ways of their fathers. In France, Victor Hugo's play *Hernani* or *Castilian Honor* captivated Paris audiences during its two-month run in 1830. It related the tragic story of the handsome nobleman Don Juan of Aragon, who, unjustly deprived of his lands and possessions, pursued a life of banditry until his honor was restored. At the feast celebrating his marriage to his beloved Dona Sol, Hernani hears strains from the horn he had given to the jealous nobleman Ruy Gomez in exchange for his life, with the promise that when he next heard it, he would

Figure 10.3
Léopold Robert, *The Brigand Asleep*, 1826. Oil on canvas,
46 × 38 cm (18¼ × 13¾ in).
Wallace Collection, London.



commit suicide, a promise Hernani tragically honored. What these bandit stories had in common was the conflict between desire and duty, justice and fairness, the legally empowered and the disenfranchised, conflicts directly relevant to the unstable social and political situation in nineteenth-century France.

Robert's colorfully dressed outcasts rest under open skies among the rugged hills of the Roman campagna. Their situation may result from circumstances beyond their control or from a preference for a life of freedom and adventure to submission to the rules of society. In either case, Robert addressed an increasingly frequent situation—individuals and families expelled for economic reasons from the security of village life to fend for themselves in a hostile world. This radical shift in living conditions necessitated a change in attitude and social behavior exemplified by the bandit couple: suspicion, self-sufficiency, insecurity, and egotism replace trust, interdependence, security, and altruism. Survival in this brave new world depended on the cultivation of new skills—flexibility, adaptability, and ingenuity. At the same time, Robert upheld the traditional separation of spheres by portraying the wife as dutiful, loyal, vigilant, and caring for the needs of her husband. A rifle by his side, the brigand fulfills his role as family protector and provider.

The dutiful female peasant was a frequent theme in French painting after 1848. The most historically significant French peasant woman was Joan of Arc, whose popularity skyrocketed in nineteenth-century France. *Joan of Arc* (1879, Figure 10.4) by Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848–84), exhibited at the 1880 Salon, successfully combined the modes of history and genre in a format and style compatible with contemporary academic standards and public taste. Joan, a fifteenth-century peasant, obeyed the divine order delivered to her in a series of religious visions and left her family to save France from English occupation during the Hundred Years' War. She masqueraded as a male soldier—wearing armor, cutting her hair short, and fighting



Figure 10.4
Jules Bastien-Lepage, *Joan of Arc*, 1879. Oil on canvas, 254 × 279 cm (8 ft 4 in × 9 ft 1 in). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



To see monuments
of Joan of Arc in
Paris, go to **www.**

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bravely—initially deceiving the comrades she inspired and leading them to a series of military victories. Despite her indispensable assistance, King Charles VII abandoned Joan instead of rescuing her when she was captured at the Battle of Compiègne. She was tried by the English, found guilty of heresy (based on cross-dressing), and burned at the stake in a public execution held in Rouen in 1431, when she was 19. Like David's Horatii brothers (Figure 2.8), Joan signified selfless commitment to a higher calling. In the wake of the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), Joan emerged as a symbol for France's recovery from foreign defeat. In her role as savior of France, Joan functioned as both a secular and a religious saint, and was canonized (declared a saint) by Pope Benedict XV in 1920.

Bastien-Lepage shows Joan, an important historical person *and* a peasant, startled from her spinning by the angelic voices she strains to hear. In her haste, Joan has knocked over her stool, and she leans motionless against an apple tree, with the vision she alone sees—an armored Joan in the company of a haloed angel—represented as a kind of thought bubble appearing behind her. In representing the turning point in Joan's personal life and in French history, Bastien-Lepage adhered to academic practice. The title and details of the painting were clear. Joan, in her simplicity, beauty, dedication to domestic tasks, and obedience to divine direction, epitomized the docile and contented peasant bourgeois Parisians imagine inhabited the French countryside.

Still, some critics found the inclusion of supernatural occurrences in an ostensibly naturalistic scene disturbing. Bastien-Lepage's purpose, of course, was to record all essential aspects of this event, but in painting the invisible, he transgressed a conceptual boundary that detracted from the believability of the scene as it would have been viewed by an eye witness. In his effort to picture the invisible, Bastien-Lepage deviated from academic norms, coming close to the aspirations of the day's most progressive artists, the Symbolists (Chapter 13). In addition, Symbolists considered music the most perfect of the arts because of its fleeting and intangible qualities, and Bastien-Lepage, by suggesting sound (hearing voices), incorporated yet another dimension prized by Symbolists.

POWERFUL PEASANTS: HEROIC OR THREATENING?

Peasant imagery often expressed artists' attitudes toward urban-industrial transformation. These attitudes fell into two main categories: (1) noble laborers with a quasi-sacred connectedness to the land, guardians of ancient wisdom and essential values, and (2) ignorant, superstitious, uncivilized brutes, illiterate and easily led astray. Courbet's country folk did not fit comfortably into either category, contributing to the controversy *Burial at Ornans* generated. Ability to categorize an object or idea and to understand its relationship to norms is an essential ingredient to stability—political, psychological, or social. By intentionally transgressing norms, Courbet engaged in challenging behavior now associated with a modernist approach.

Even within these two categories of peasant imagery—the rooted and the brutalized—there were many nuances, and the meaning of a particular work reflected the time and place of its creation as well as the attitude of the artist. The French painter most closely associated with “rooted” peasant imagery is Jean-François Millet (1814–75). When *The Sower* (Figure 10.5) appeared at the 1850 Salon, the art critic Théophile Gautier declared: “Of all the peasants shown at this year's Salon, *The Sower*



Figure 10.5
Jean-François Millet, *The Sower*, 1850. Oil on Canvas.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

is the one we liked best. There is a grandeur and style in this figure with his violent gesture, with a form proudly tattered, and who seems to be painted with the earth that he is sowing” (Sensier and Mantz 1881: 114). Just as David (Figure 3.5) ennobled Napoleon by evoking equestrian portraits like *Marcus Aurelius*, Millet utilized a similar strategy to elevate *The Sower*, whose pose evokes the *Apollon Belvedere*. The difference was that Napoleon was a national hero, while the sower was anonymous. Millet’s classical reference may have evoked thoughts of France under Roman rule, a time when French territory was called Gaul by the conquering Romans. It would thus suggest a comparison of the status of French peasants in the Roman past—when French peasants were enslaved by foreign occupiers—and the present, when they were virtually enslaved by greedy landowners. These eras contrast with the imaginary rural ideal existing in the intervening period, when free French peasants enjoyed a wholesome relationship to the soil, upon whose fertility and careful management their existence depended. Still, the figure’s generic quality enabled Millet to heroize the peasant by transforming *The Sower* into a symbol of all peasants, whose routinized drudgery won them at best the right of survival for another year.

Millet came from a prosperous farming family in Normandy. Unlike Courbet, who assumed the persona of a rude country bumpkin while in Paris, Millet behaved as an intellectual and connoisseur. He quoted Dante and Shakespeare in letters, and owned Japanese prints, Gothic sculpture, and a painting by Netherlandish artist Rogier van der Weyden (1450–1529). He studied first with local artists in Cherbourg, then at the École des Beaux-Arts, funded by a municipally sponsored scholarship.

He failed to win the Prix de Rome in 1839, but a portrait he painted was accepted by the 1840 Salon. In 1849 (the turbulent year after the revolution), Millet left Paris for rural Barbizon, because, as he had written to a friend in 1837, “the immense crowd of horses and carriages crossing and pushing each other, the narrow streets, the air and smell of Paris seemed to choke my head and heart, and almost stifled me” (Ady 1896: 39). Like Courbet, Millet did not socialize with peasants. Despite a life spent in their midst, Millet remained an outsider, an observer. To him, peasant life meant unmitigated drudgery. It symbolized for him the “sad fate of humanity” (Millet 1998: 374). Millet suffered from migraines and supported a large family, which partly explains his view that life was synonymous with suffering, a theme Rodin later took up in his *Gates of Hell* (Figure 13.7). Although Millet, like Courbet and Hunt in *Hireling Shepherd* (Figure 7.16), disagreed with the middle-class view of peasants as happy and healthy, the implied heroism of figures like *The Sower* resulted in their positive interpretation by all but Millet’s most politically conservative contemporaries. Conservatives worried that such powerful and brutalized peasants might destabilize the *status quo*. Indeed, sowers, perceived as independent and self-sufficient, were often interpreted metaphorically in contemporary journalism as sowers of the seeds of Republican ideas. This was possible, since one of the first acts of the Second Republic government in 1848 was to abolish property ownership as a prerequisite for voting—male suffrage became universal in France, granting men like Millet’s sower a political voice for the first time in French history.

Millet represented peasants in a timeless manner, seemingly unaffected by modern agricultural innovation, which encouraged idealization. As with Constable, Millet’s peasants exemplified a stable relationship between people and nature, and continuity with the past and tradition. On the one hand, figures like *The Sower* functioned as metaphors for the eternal struggles characterizing the human condition, a situation relevant to urbanites and country folk alike. On the other, details like the predominant red, white, and blue palette encouraged viewers to interpret *The Sower* as a revolutionary symbol in the spirit of Delacroix’s *Liberty* (Figure 3.13). While Millet denied having Republican sympathies, his choice of these colors during a revolutionary moment in French history cannot have been accidental. Despite its simple composition and subject, *The Sower* permitted a variety of interpretations. This open-endedness came to typify a modern approach to art. Millet’s peasant images influenced later artists: Degas owned several Millet drawings, and van Gogh, Picasso, and Georges Seurat all made copies of his works.

The Russian painter Ivan Kramskoy (1837–87) represented peasants as noble, hardworking, and connected to the land, like Millet, but also as alert, dignified, and intelligent, qualities with which educated and urban audiences could identify. Kramskoy, a founder of The Wanderers (Chapter 9), studied at the Imperial Academy in St Petersburg, where he took a leadership role in efforts at artistic and social reform. Artists, he felt, must be socially engaged and foster cooperative, egalitarian ideas in their personal and professional lives. Kramskoy painted subjects like *Forester* (1874, Figure 10.6) to transform attitudes toward the peasantry on the part of aristocrats and bureaucrats and to improve conditions for a group to which more than 80 percent of Russians belonged. One strategy—that adopted by Courbet, Hunt, and Eero Järnefelt—was to evoke sympathy for the plight of peasants. But feelings of superiority might accompany this response and lead to resistance to reform. By promoting empathy—enabling the viewer to imagine her/himself in the forester’s



For Anthea Callen’s thoughts on the significance of *The Sower*’s size, go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos



Figure 10.6

Ivan Kramskoy, *Forester*, 1874.
Oil on canvas, 84 × 62 cm
(33 × 24 in). Tretyakov Gallery,
Moscow.

position—Kramskoy hoped to encourage social change. Simply, yet neatly, dressed and well-groomed, this peasant secured for himself a position of responsibility as a guardian of the forest a decade after the end of serfdom, along with a modest, yet adequate, standard of living. Hardworking, self-reliant, and competent, this peasant projects character traits valued by the bourgeois entrepreneurs who would modernize Russia. Dramatically lit against a somber background like David's *Marat* (Figure 3.3), Kramskoy's *Forester* appears as a national hero. Closer examination reveals that the forester stands enveloped in a dark Russian forest, the site of superstitious folk tales, national identity, and modern commerce; forestry played a key role in Russia's developing economy. The forester's gaze engages the viewers', acknowledging their presence and forming a bridge across space and time.

Many details of nineteenth-century artworks conveyed meanings for contemporary viewers that we understand today only through historical investigation. For instance, Courbet's *Stone Breakers* (1849, Figure 10.7) seems a straightforward image of a poor peasant man and boy hard at work breaking stones. But what was the purpose of their activity? Stone-breaking was a modern occupation necessitated by a demand for paving. Paving enabled carts and carriages to travel more quickly and safely. Efficient and rapid communication was required by farmers, whose surplus crops needed to reach urban markets before rotting. Businessmen and government officials were required to travel more and more. Finally, escalating tourism increased demand for comfortable and efficient travel. Men engaged in stone-breaking were



To better understand the significance of forests in 19th-century Russia go to **www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos**

Figure 10.7

Gustave Courbet,
Stone Breakers, 1849.
Oil on canvas, 190 × 300 cm
(6 ft 2 in × 9 ft 9 in). Destroyed
in World War II.



not engaged in a traditional form of labor with roots in the past and expressive of the symbiotic relationship between people and nature. Rather, stonebreakers were peasants forced off the land into backbreaking and poorly compensated wage labor, the benefits of which went directly to the middle and upper classes. Because of this, Courbet's stonebreakers did not represent an ideal image of the rural peasantry to contemporary viewers.

Significantly, Courbet did not idealize these stonebreakers: they wear dirty, tattered and mended clothing. These strong and oppressed workers, who spent their days hacking apart stones, seemed threatening to contemporary, middle-class viewers in 1850, the year *Stone Breakers* debuted at the Salon. While the majority of 1848 revolutionaries were urban craftsmen and workers, Courbet's stonebreakers instilled fear because they wielded implements that were potential weapons and produced the paving stones used for barricades and projectiles by revolutionary insurgents (as in Meissonier's *Memory of Civil War*, Figure 9.2). Courbet encouraged a feeling of mistrust by shielding the men's faces from the viewer. Because their expressions and physiognomies could not be read, viewers could not determine whether these men were dangerous or submissive. Courbet painted an image that provoked anxiety in a destabilized and modernizing world.



To find out how Courbet explained his inspiration for *Stone Breakers*, and what contemporary critics had to say about it, go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

PITIABLE PEASANTS

Henry Wallis (1830–1916) studied at the Royal Academy from 1848 until he moved to Paris around 1850. There, he may have seen Courbet's *Stone Breakers*, which may in turn have inspired his 1858 RA success, *The Stonebreaker* (Figure 10.8). Here, the moment depicted and the painting's context differ completely from Courbet's. This stonebreaker is alone and dead. His peaceful face and limp posture mark him as an object of pity rather than fear. The tonalities of his skin and clothing harmonize with the setting sun and the contours of his body echo the hill against which he leans, suggesting fusion into the landscape that may be his final resting place. The peaceful twilight landscape reinforces awareness of the end of a day, of a life, and encourages contemplation of metaphysical questions.



Figure 10.8
Henry Wallis, *The Stonebreaker*,
1857–58. Oil on panel, 65 × 79
cm (25½ × 31 in). Birmingham
Art Gallery.

Still, critics responded to Wallis's *Stonebreaker* in various ways: some found it shocking and offensive, while others found it solemn and spiritual. These differences can be explained by varying attitudes toward the Poor Law (1834). Inmates of public workhouses (homeless shelters) were often required to engage in such arduous labor to pay for their food and lodging. Supporters of the Poor Law praised the fact that those receiving assistance earned it, but critics noted that this situation did not permit the poor to save money with which to escape the cycle of drudgery, suffering, and degradation. Wallis, like Turner and other British artists, included quotations from literary works with his RA submissions in order to clarify his intentions. For *Stonebreaker*, Wallis chose selections from Tennyson's poem "A Dirge" (1830) and Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34), both of whose themes were the indignity of indigence and incessant toil. The painting's frame bore the inscription "Now is done thy long day's work," from Tennyson, and in the RA catalogue, Wallis included Carlyle's description of such labor: "For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed ... and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom."

On a bleak and windy day, a widow leads a solemn procession of fishermen who carry the corpse of her drowned husband in Jozef Israëls's *Fishermen Carrying a Drowned Man* (1861, Figure 10.9). With a head bowed in grief and resignation, this barefoot widow leads her docile, barefoot children homeward. Israëls (1824–1911) represented this anonymous and all-too-common scene with the dignity of West's *Agrippina* (Figure 2.2). Even its theme and composition recall the earlier Neoclassical work, then hanging in a private English collection, but familiar through John Boydell's 1776 engraving. Israëls, whose father was a stockbroker, entered the Royal Academy of Art in Amsterdam in 1843, and the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1846. In 1855, Israëls visited the fishing village of Zandvoort, and began producing the fishing subjects for which he is known. To create the proper mood and to elevate his subject

Figure 10.9

Jozef Israels, *Fishermen Carrying a Drowned Man*, 1861. Oil on canvas, 129 × 244 cm (4 ft 2¾ in × 8 ft). The National Gallery, London.



above mere genre, Israels evoked funerary images of dead heroes and martyrs. As a result, *Fishermen Carrying a Drowned Man* becomes an archetypal representation of self-sacrifice, a quality appreciated by viewers at the 1861 Salon and the London International Exhibition of 1862. A British spectator purchased it following the exhibition, and it has remained in Britain ever since.

At the other end of Europe, Vasily Perov, like Hunt (and, earlier, Goya in *Third of May 1808*, Figure 4.10), criticized clergy assigned to minister to peasants. *Easter Procession* (1865, Figure 10.10) indicted the Russian Orthodox clergy for failing to provide responsible leadership. Visibly inebriated, a middle-aged monk (distinguished by his brown robe) stumbles down the steps of a country cottage, grasping a crucifix in one hand while steadying himself with the other. Beside him, and beneath the porch, lie even more drunken villagers; the lady of the house pours water onto the

Figure 10.10

Vasily Perov, *Easter Procession*, 1865. Oil on canvas 72 × 89 cm (28 × 35 in). Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



head of a collapsed drunkard in order to revive him. Perov depicted a scene prior to the Easter religious service, which will take place in the church in the background. Local monks gathered villagers for the year's most sacred celebration by stopping by each house, whose inhabitants offered hospitality before joining the procession. Some have indulged to excess. At the painting's center stands a young woman holding an icon of the Mother of God, verifying the centrality of religion among Russian peasants. She demonstrates proper respect by holding it with a cloth. Her correct behavior contrasts with the negligence of the elderly monk, who not only carries the icon with his bare hands, but holds it upside down. His unkempt hair, rag-bound feet, torn hem, and hole-ridden cassock suggest a further stage of degeneration to which the middle-aged monk seems well on the way. Ahead of them, a younger, visibly alert, and sober monk seems to engage his neighbor in conversation in a manner that holds out hope for the future. Ahead of this pair walks a well-dressed young man reading a newspaper. Clearly literate, he embodies the connection between prosperity and education that motivated social reform and educational initiatives in Russia as elsewhere. His literacy is significant because Russia had one of the western world's least literate populations. In 1830, only five percent of the population attended school, and the establishment of public schools in 1842 did little to improve the situation—in 1855 seven percent of Russians attended school. In 1900, when Germany boasted almost 100 percent literacy and France almost 70 percent, Russia's literacy rate was below 40 percent.

Perov's critique of the Orthodox Church occurred in the wake of Slavophilism, an intellectual movement flourishing in Russia during the 1840s and 1850s. Slavophilism advocated preserving and studying peasant music, stories, and customs. It also asserted that the central message of Orthodoxy—love, tolerance, and community—was best exemplified by peasants, who provided models for the reform of Russian society. Slavophiles contrasted this value system with that of Roman Catholics and Protestants, which they considered materialistic and authoritarian. Perov seems to suggest that neither Russian peasants nor their religious leaders lived up to the expectations established by Slavophiles. Perov painted *Easter Procession* in 1861, the year Tsar Alexander II ended serfdom. For peasants who suddenly found themselves free, the future seemed dark and uncertain; small plots of land were often unable to support the peasant families that owned them. Perhaps more than any other time in Russian history, peasants needed the leadership of their clergy to guide them through this crisis.

IDEALIZED PEASANTS

The peasant paintings of Courbet and Hunt appeared just after 1848, a moment when depopulation of the countryside—and all of the social problems this generated—began to accelerate at a pace threatening social stability. Previously considered simple, tradition-bound, and harmless, peasants, especially when dislocated, assumed more frightening associations (Figure 10.11). This menacing aspect registered with contemporary viewers of *Burial at Ornans* and *The Hireling Shepherd*. The radical quality of these paintings become clearer when compared to Erik Werenskiöld's *Peasant Funeral* (1883–85, Figure 10.12), critically acclaimed at the 1889 Exposition universelle (world's fair) in Paris. Despite similarities in subject and setting, *Peasant Funeral* presented a reassuringly remote and complacent peasantry. It showed rural folk as urbanites and



Figure 10.11
Anonymous, *The French Revolution. Scene in the Throne Room of the Tuileries Palace on 24 February 1848, 1848.*



Figure 10.12
Erik Werenskiöld, *Peasant Funeral*, 1883–85. Oil on canvas, 102 × 150 cm (40 × 59 in). The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.

the bourgeoisie wanted to see them—clean-scrubbed, robust, modest, and tidy—and presented in an appropriately medium-sized painting. Heads bowed in prayer signaled acceptance of both state religion (Lutheranism) and higher authority, thus containing these peasants within acceptable social and political parameters. Critics praised *Peasant Funeral* as the epitome of Norwegianness, despite the fact that few if any Parisian critics had been to Norway. They perceived Werenskiöld's peasants in harmony with each other and their unspoiled surroundings, with physiognomies and geography distinctly non-French. Werenskiöld's peasants evinced a mystical interdependence between people and land that contemporaries considered a quality typical of peasants. For viewers who had been uprooted from ancestral villages, *Peasant Funeral* presented

an enviable vision of stability and security, while for the bourgeoisie it furnished a reassuring, if fictional, affirmation of docility and well-being.

As awareness dawned that rural life and traditions were rapidly and forever vanishing, German intellectuals like the Grimm brothers began collecting folktales. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published their first collection in 1812, and by 1818, they had published more than 500 tales in two volumes. Their zeal for collecting and preserving German folk culture inspired others to gather ethnographic materials, from objects and architecture to music and language. Paradoxically, just as its survival became endangered, peasant culture evoked associations of security, stability, and nostalgia.

Artists like Ferdinand Waldmüller (Figure 7.7), Alexei Venetsianov (Figure 7.12), and the Swede Amalia Lindegren (1814–91) recorded details of custom and costume for a bourgeois public for whom such images represented variously regional or national identity, a cherished childhood, or an imaginary past. In *Sunday Evening in a Dalarna Cottage* (1860, Figure 10.13) Lindegren depicted a joyful, if commonplace, moment, when a family's three young children dance to the strains of fiddle music played by their father, while the mother holds their energetic baby on her lap. Consistent with an urbanite's idealized view of peasant life, the cottage is clean and cozy, simply furnished, with healthy, happy children and loving parents, all of whom are dressed in clean local costumes in impeccable condition—in other words, a rural version of the ideal middle-class family. Lindegren, who studied at the Swedish Royal Academy (1847–50) and in the Paris studio of academician Léon Cogniet (1794–1880), exhibited at the 1853 Salon, as well as in London, Vienna, and her native Stockholm. In 1857, Lindegren visited the central Swedish province of Dalarna and began producing popular rural genre scenes.

As with many ethnographically precise peasant images, Lindegren's offers different depths of understanding depending upon the viewer's familiarity with the



Figure 10.13

Amalia Lindegren, *Sunday Evening in a Dalarna Cottage*, 1860. Oil on canvas, 88 × 117 cm (34½ × 46 in). Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

culture depicted. For non-Swedish viewers, Lindegren portrayed contented country folk celebrating a moment of familial bliss. Swedes would see more. Costume details situate the scene in Dalarna—the girl's striped apron is from the village of Rättvik, and the clock and fur coat are typical of Dalarna. The title identifies the time of day, as does the light-infused outdoors: at Dalarna's latitude, darkness in, say, late June, does not descend until after 11 p.m. Of all Sweden's provinces, the one most closely associated with fiddle music is Dalarna, a province celebrated as the epicenter of national identity because of its tenacious preservation of tradition. Its villages successfully resisted land reform, which meant that pastures were open to all, arable land was farmed collectively, and bathing and baking facilities were communal. Elsewhere in Sweden, the red houses of post-reform independent farms dotted the countryside. To Swedes, Dalarna stood for resistance to central authority, but also for a generic Swedish identity, since this was the place where, in 1520, Sweden's first king, Gustav Wasa, rid the country of Danish occupiers with the help of Dalarna's notoriously brave and fearsome warrior-farmers. Thus a painting that, at first glance, appears simply as a light-hearted peasant idyll, could have profound meaning for a native audience.

Aiming to promote a generic German identity, Wilhelm Leibl (1844–1900) focused on Bavarian peasants, renowned for their piety and cultural conservatism. Leibl began as an apprentice locksmith, but quit in 1861 to study art in Cologne. Two years later, Leibl moved to Munich and enrolled at the Academy, where he studied

Figure 10.14

Wilhelm Leibl, *Three Women in Church*, 1878–81. Oil on canvas, 113 × 77 cm (44 3/8 × 30 1/4 in). Kunsthalle, Hamburg.



with Karl von Piloty (Chapter 11). Courbet considered Leibl's portrait of Frau Geddon (1869, Neue Pinokothek, Munich) the highlight of the 1869 International Art Exhibition at the Glaspalast in Munich. He invited Leibl to Paris, where he stayed until the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in July 1870. From 1873 Leibl lived in Bavarian villages and focused on portraiture and detailed genre paintings that reminded contemporaries of Hans Holbein.

Three Women in Church (1878–81, Figure 10.14) took three years to complete, due to its painstaking detail. Leibl depicted women from the village of Miesbach, identifiable by the younger woman's costume. The elaborately carved oak church pews are typical of Bavaria, a region famous for its skilled woodcarvers. As the rest of Germany industrialized, Bavaria, with its forests, fields, mountains, and villages, came to represent for Germans what Dalarna represented for Swedes—pride, piety, and tradition. Like the inhabitants of Dalarna, Bavarians were culturally conservative, disinclined to alter a way of life that had brought them happiness and prosperity for centuries. Local pride was encouraged by agricultural festivals, the most famous of which, *Oktoberfest*, was first held in 1810 to celebrate the marriage of Ludwig I. When *Three Women in Church* was exhibited in March 1882 in Munich, more than 1,000 visitors per day came to see it. It then traveled to Paris and Vienna, attracting large crowds and positive reviews. By the time van Gogh admired it when he saw a reproduction in 1883, it was Leibl's most famous work.

GRIM REALITIES

Although most Europeans and Americans were peasants and farmers in the 1840s, it was the series of droughts, famines, discriminatory legislation, and consequent social unrest that brought their plight to the attention of the middle and upper classes toward the end of that decade. English artist George Frederick Watts (1817–1904), horrified by reports about the Irish Hunger (1846–50), conveyed the denigration of Irish peasants in *The Irish Famine* (1850, Figure 10.15). The Hunger's cause was not a lack of food—wheat, meat, and dairy products were exported from Ireland to England in great quantities. Rather, it was a lack of money for purchasing food when the potatoes planted in the kitchen gardens of poor families (often their only source of nourishment) caught a blight. Potatoes were the preferred crop among Europe's poor because of their high caloric value—an acre of potatoes yielded more than three times as many calories as an acre of wheat.

A 15 December 1849 article in the *Illustrated London News* summarized the Irish catastrophe:

The Poor-law, said to be for the relief of the people and the means of their salvation, was the instrument of their destruction ... That law, too, laid down a form for evicting the people, and thus gave the sanction and encouragement of legislation to exterminate them ... calmly and quietly from Westminster [seat of the British parliament] ... did the decree go forth which has made the temporary but terrible visitation of a potato rot the means of exterminating, through the slow process of disease and houseless starvation, nearly the half of the Irish.

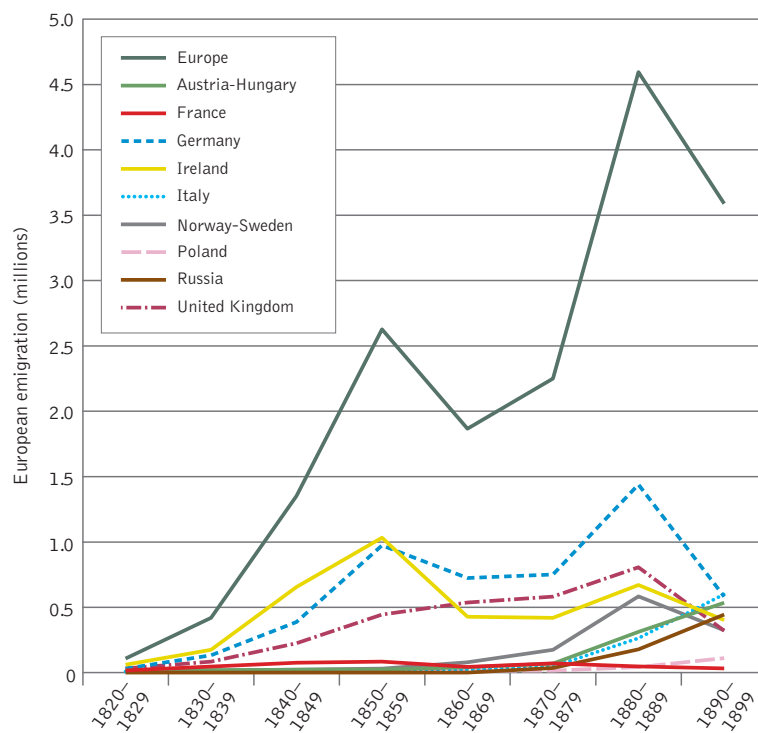
In 1845, the Irish population numbered about 8.5 million. By 1851, despite a high birth rate, Ireland's population dwindled to about six million. More than 500,000

Figure 10.15

George Frederick Watts,
The Irish Famine, 1850.
Oil on canvas, 180 × 198 cm
(5 ft 11 in × 6 ft 6 in). Watts
Gallery, Compton, Surrey.



died of starvation during that period, and 1.5 million were forced to emigrate. One landowner, whose streamlined agricultural practices required fewer workers, chartered two ships in order to rid himself of the unwanted natives living on his land and sent them to the United States without bothering to inquire into their feelings about emigration.



Data Box 10: Nineteenth-Century European Emigration

“The Hunger” was a form of ethnic cleansing. England had occupied Ireland since the mid-seventeenth century. It confiscated all land owned by the overwhelmingly Roman Catholic population, forbade them from owning anything valuable (like horses), shipped them to colonial outposts as slaves, and deprived Catholics of legal rights. It was not until 1778 that Catholics could again own and inherit property, which meant also that Catholics owning sufficient property could vote. Limited civil rights followed. In 1828, Daniel O’Connell was elected representative to the British parliament, but because he was Catholic, he was barred from office until the Penal Laws were repealed in 1829. By the early 1840s, O’Connell and the Young Ireland group he established attracted tens of thousands to rallies supporting Irish independence (Britain had formally annexed Ireland in 1801). Crop failure occurred at a propitious moment for fearful Anglican landowners who maintained hegemony through starvation and forced emigration.

Watts treated his subject with the monumental dignity of a Holy Family. Evicted from their home, this family sits in a desolate landscape with neither food nor shelter. The weak and sickly mother struggles to fulfill her role by cradling her infant in one arm and holding her demoralized husband’s tensed fist with her other hand. Behind him, a despondent woman, doubled over in grief, seems to portend the tragic fate of this unfortunate family. Totally at the mercy of their cruel and greedy British occupiers, the Irish were forced out of their homes and out of their country, stripped of the tools and resources they needed to survive.

Léon Frédéric (1856–1940) studied privately before entering the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels. In 1878, he began exhibiting at the Brussels Triennial Salon and joined *L’Essor*, a secessionist organization of art students that held annual exhibitions (1876–91). Because of its more frequent exhibitions, *L’Essor* provided an exhibition venue preferable to the state-sponsored Triennial. *L’Essor* also organized lotteries, giving middle-class art enthusiasts an opportunity to acquire original works of art (just as the German art associations did, see Chapter 7). King Leopold II of Belgium purchased works shown there, an official sign of approval. In 1882, Frédéric received a gold medal for *The Chalk Sellers* (Figure 10.16), an insightful presentation of the hardships of peasant life.

By the time Frédéric adopted a triptych format for this heartrending image of peasant life, such strategies no longer provoked the outrage they had in 1851, when Courbet exhibited *Burial at Ornans*. The tranquility of the *Morning*, *Noontime*, and

Figure 10.16

Léon Frédéric, *The Chalk Sellers*, 1881–83. Oil on canvas, side panels 200 × 115 cm (6 ft 6 in × 3 ft 9 in), center panel 200 × 268 cm (6 ft 6 in × 8 ft 9 in). Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels.



Evening scenes, along with their dominant gray tonalities, enhances the contemplative character of Frédéric's painting. He presented a lucid narrative telling the story of a family of three (a grouping evoking associations with the Holy Family). Poor, barefoot, and ragged, yet dignified and hard-working, they trudge daily from their village to the city eking out a living by selling blocks of chalk, which the older two carry in makeshift backpacks. Belgium's Campine region, where *The Chalk Sellers* is set, had unproductive soil, but was rich in coal, chalk, and lime. Chalk was inexpensive and used for a multitude of purposes: white-washing walls, as a reagent in soap- and paper-making and tanning, and as an ingredient in mortar and cement, used with increasing frequency in construction.

A gray industrial smog hangs in the sky of all three images, a reminder of the unhealthy conditions plaguing industrial areas during the nineteenth century. In a metaphoric sense, the blue skies of an earlier era are now veiled by the coal-smoke mist of the modern industrial world. In the side panels, the family—a motherless one like Amerling's Arthäbers (Figure 7.5)—walks to and from the city, while in the central picture, they share a simple meal with other, equally destitute, victims of industrialization. The leafless trees (usually a sign of winter), combined with the apparently uncomfortable temperature, reinforce the desolate mood, suggesting that nature as well as people fall victim to the greed of factory owners. While Frédéric hoped to generate sympathy for the plight of the poor and to encourage reform, affluent viewers might view such individuals as inherently inferior and undeserving of improved conditions. This attitude had scientific support in the social Darwinist theory of British philosopher Herbert Spencer. In his widely read *First Principles* (1862), Spencer, who coined the phrase “survival of the fittest,” postulated that acquired traits (including character, intelligence, and skill) were passed genetically from one generation to the next and that environmental factors affected a person's evolution and potential. Freedom for Spencer was an essential condition for healthy development; its absence resulted in stunted intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth.

Hardship affected peasants untouched by industrialization as well. In *Swidden Farming* (1892, Figure 10.17), the Finnish painter Eero Järnefelt (1863–1937) depicted the oldest form of agriculture practiced in Finland. For 4,000 years, Finns burned down sections of forest in order to make room for cultivation. These areas were farmed until the soil was depleted, after which the forest was allowed to regrow. Unlike densely populated Belgium and Ireland, Finland had relatively few inhabitants (eight inhabitants per square kilometer compared with Belgium's 83), and most land was communally or state-owned, allowing peasants virtually free use. Climatic conditions were harsher, however, and the growing season much shorter, making survival a challenge even with free access to land—just as it was for many who migrated to the American Midwest.

Järnefelt studied at Helsinki's drawing academy from 1874 to 1878, then at the Imperial Academy in St Petersburg from 1883 to 1886, since from 1809 to 1917 Finland was a Grand Duchy under Russian rule. Although a successful portrait painter in Finland, he wanted to live in Paris, the era's liveliest cultural center. Järnefelt studied at the independent Académie Julian from 1886 to 1891, returning subsequently to Finland. His skill as an artist in an international arena was confirmed in 1889 and 1900, when he won medals at the Expositions universelle in Paris.

Järnefelt revealed the brutal realities of peasant life devoid of the romanticism evident in Lindegren, Leibl, or Werenskiöld. In the heart of a forest that seems to extend infinitely, three men and three women manage the burning of a forest tract.



Figure 10.17
Eero Järnefelt, *Swidden Farming*, 1892. Oil on canvas, 131 × 168 cm (4 ft 4½ in × 5 ft 6 in). Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki.

Shabbily clad in home-woven linens, hand-knit wool socks, and woven birch bark shoes, their skinny, sooty bodies bend to the task at hand, their survival directly dependent on the success of their labor. Järnefelt made no attempt to ennoble his subjects through association with the Bible or classical art, as had Bonheur, Millet, or Watts. This inhibited viewers from displacing these unfortunates into a psychologically more comfortable, if imaginary, realm; it forced direct confrontation with misery. Here, the interrelationship between people and nature assumes a deadly serious character. Unlike Waldmüller's peasants, Järnefelt's are not happy or healthy, nor do they receive spiritual sustenance from their close relationship to nature. They do not contemplate the wonders of divine creation like Friedrich's *Traveler* (Figure 5.15) or Watkins's viewer in *Yosemite* (Figure 8.15). In *Swidden Farming*, Järnefelt emphasized the discrepancy between the peasants' and the bourgeois' relationship to nature.

In the paintings of Lindegren, Leibl, and Werenskiöld the viewer observes the scene unnoticed, but in Järnefelt's painting, the viewer's eye is met by the soot-faced little girl, who pauses in her work to meet our gaze. In doing so, she breeches the gap between viewer and viewed, a gap that conceptually protects the anonymity and assumes the detachment of the viewer. Now that the girl acknowledges our presence, how do we respond? If we are contemporary Finnish peasants like she, we too are pausing in our labor to exchange glances with a co-worker. But if we are bourgeois urbanites, how should we react, with our new knowledge of peasant hardship?

The unprecedented pressures peasants labored under during the nineteenth century led to increasingly violent riots, particularly where age-old ways were forced to change. A native of Silesia, a region straddling western Poland and eastern Germany, Julius Hübner (1806–82) was sensitive to the economic hardships of its peasants. Their survival depended on supplementing their income with the weaving of damask—a luxurious linen fabric, usually white, with a pattern woven into it in such a way that it is reversible. When factory production of damask (now called Jacquard) began in the

1830s, the price dropped dramatically, meaning starvation for many Silesian peasants. The Silesians were not alone. In England, where industrialization occurred earlier, the weekly income of home weavers in Lancashire dropped from 25 shillings in 1800, to nine in 1817 (approximately \$40 in today's currency).

Angered by the mechanization that threatened their existence, 300 Silesian weavers rioted in 1844, destroying mechanical looms and ransacking the homes of factory owners. Although Prussian troops stopped the violence, anger mounted. Frustration resulting from widespread job loss among skilled handicraft workers due to industrialization contributed directly to the revolutions of 1848. In response to the 1844 riot, Hübner depicted a scene explaining how the basically peaceful and hardworking Silesian peasants were driven by circumstances beyond their control to acts of desperation (1846, Figure 10.18). Weavers in Silesia earned half the salary of women factory workers, and one-fifth the salary of coalminers—in other words, not enough for survival. Their plight radicalized many, including the German poet Heinrich Heine, who commemorated the event with “Song of the Silesian Weavers:”

*No tears in their somber eyes,
They sit at the loom and bare their teeth:
Germany, we are weaving your shroud,
We are weaving into it
The threefold curse
We are weaving, we are weaving!*

*... A curse on the King, the King of the Rich
Whom our wretchedness could not soften,
Who has extorted our last penny from us,
And has us shot like dogs
We are weaving, we are weaving! ...*

(Heine 1982: 544)

Figure 10.18

Carl Hübner, *The Silesian Weavers*, 1846. Oil on canvas, 77 × 105 cm (30½ × 41⅞ in). Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin.



The 1845–46 famine, resulting from the inability of Silesians to purchase food, caused 80,000 to become sick with typhus, 16,000 of whom died. This catastrophe survived in the German memory as the epitome of industrialization's negative impact; in 1892, fellow Silesian Gerhart Hauptmann published his play based on the 1844 revolt, *The Weaver*. It was banned following its 1893 premiere in Berlin by a German government that zealously encouraged industrialization. Hübner studied at the Berlin Academy with the Nazarene Wilhelm Schadow and moved with him when Schadow became director of the Düsseldorf Academy in 1826. Following two years in Rome beginning in 1829, Hübner returned to Germany and taught at the Dresden Academy beginning in 1839. Hübner belonged to the so-called Düsseldorf School, a group of artists who had studied at the academy there and specialized in medium-sized paintings of literary and historical subjects characterized by careful attention to detail.

CONCLUSION

In an 1887 letter to his compatriot August Strindberg, the Swedish painter Carl Larsson described his stay in rural Sweden:

Hills, mountains, valleys, streams. Kindly, powerful, blond people, mostly with honest, innocent faces. You know, I was so happy, felt so free in the midst of these, my own folks, as they say. They were a simple, pure breed, not the jumble of human tramps one finds in the cities ... They were like flowers of the field, the result or product of the earth.

(Larsson 1952: 122–3)

Three decades earlier, in his popular study *Natural History of the German People as a Basis for a German Social Politics* (1851–54, 3 vols.), Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl also voiced the thoughts of many when he wrote:

A people must die out if it can no longer understand the legacy of the forests from which it is strengthened and rejuvenated. We must preserve the forest, not just to keep the stove going in winter, but also to keep the pulse of the people warm and happy so that Germans can remain German.

(Riehl 1854: 32)

Both Larsson and Riehl expressed a nostalgically tinged, ethnographic interest in peasants as guardians of the national patrimony based on the naïve belief that they had lived in the same place and under the same conditions for centuries. Peasants provided a reassuring link to the past for individuals as well as the nation. During the same period, however, others became fascinated by the realities and hardships of peasants at a time of economic, social, and political change. Artists such as Courbet, Frédéric, Järnefelt, and Watts recorded the grittier aspects of peasant life in order to stimulate awareness of their plight and reform to alleviate it.

For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter along with images of Oktoberfest today, go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.



Crisis in the Academy

Art academies played a central role throughout the nineteenth century. In much of central, eastern, and northern Europe official academies controlled artists' training, exhibitions, and the art market until the end of the century. In western Europe, they represented a powerful and stable *status quo* against which artists defined their identity and relationship to the public and to tradition. The norms for style, subject, scale, composition, and technique established by academies gained widespread acceptance among the middle classes, whose interest in art increased during the nineteenth century, and it was against this template that the achievements of contemporary artists were judged. Within the French Académie des Beaux-Arts there were two competing factions: the Poussinistes and the Rubenistes. J.A.D. Ingres led the Poussin faction, which upheld eighteenth-century, Neoclassical (Davidian) ideas about ennobling subjects, restrained expression and color, compositional clarity, and a highly detailed, brushless technique. Eugène Delacroix led the Rubens faction, which promoted Romantic ideas about freedom of expression within the confines of the five subject categories (history, portraiture, genre, landscape, still life). Poussinistes privileged drawing and intellect; Rubenistes, color and emotion.

Artists understood the power of academies, and the decision to either conform or rebel was determined by a variety of personal and practical reasons. But decisions were not always so clean cut. Some artists, evidencing liberal Enlightenment values, wanted to preserve academies, but liberalize their standards. They pursued a variety of strategies in this effort, including discussion with colleagues and creating paintings (such as West's *Death of Wolfe*, Figure 3.1) that only partly conformed to academic norms. Because academic teaching was geared to the outdated needs of church and state, many artists trained elsewhere—either abroad (Düsseldorf and Munich were popular), in the private schools and studios that multiplied in the second half of the nineteenth century, or alone in museums, surrounded by masterpieces of the past. Artists wanted to be responsive to patronage shifts while securing an art education that satisfied their personal goals. When state art academies saw their control waning and the quality of their students diminishing, they often instituted reforms. These usually involved a power struggle between conservative and progressive forces, with outcomes differing from academy to academy. It was not only training, but also exhibiting and selling, that was at stake, and artists increasingly sought alternative venues. New exhibiting societies such as the Impressionists and Berlin Secession formed and art galleries proliferated.

The fortunes of academies were often linked to social and political changes. Thus the Académie Royale in France experienced one of the bumpiest histories—

abolished at the suggestion of David in 1793, it was reorganized in 1795. The result was an academy (Académie des Beaux-Arts)—an honorary organization of 40 members, including 26 artists—none of whom have ever, to this day, been a woman—and a school of fine arts (École des Beaux-Arts). Académie members selected the École's teaching staff until 1863, when a controversy over that year's Salon led to a new policy whereby the teaching staff was government-appointed, a return to greater state control. This reform still produced conservative results, but to artists it seemed a potential improvement. Further liberalization occurred in 1881, with artists (many of them loyal academicians) taking over jury selection and management of the Salon. Among the most powerful Academy members in the second half of the nineteenth century were Alexandre Cabanel, Meissonier (Chapter 10), and Gustave Moreau. One of the École's chief competitors was the Académie Suisse, founded in 1815 and run by academic painter Charles Gleyre (1806–74) from 1844 to 1868. In 1868, Gleyre moved to the newly established Académie Julian, which had several branches and functioned partly as a feeder school to the École; its teachers included École professors and Prix de Rome winners. For women, the Académie Julian provided the closest experience to academic study, since they were not admitted to the École until 1897 (the Royal Academy in London began admitting women in 1861). Some of the most renowned artists of the late nineteenth century trained at private academies: Toulouse-Lautrec, Émile Bernard, and van Gogh were all students of the now forgotten academician Fernand Cormon (1845–1924). The Salon was usually held in odd years until 1833, when it became an annual event.

Alternatives to Britain's Royal Academy (RA) emerged early on due to its exclusivity both in terms of membership and exhibiting opportunities. The British Institution (1805–67) was established as an exhibition space (Thomas Banks provided a sculpture for its façade) and the Society of British Artists was founded in 1823 with an open membership policy. Specialized groups also flourished, including the Royal Watercolour Society (founded 1804) and the rival New Society of Painters in Water Colours (founded in 1807, name changed to Institute of Painters in Water Colours in 1863). The watercolor medium grew rapidly in popularity among the public (works were smaller and less expensive) and among artists. Many women artists turned to watercolor because it was considered more genteel than messy oil painting or heavy sculpture. Its lightweight, inexpensive, and quick drying properties also ideally suited it to landscape painting, for which there was an increasing demand.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TITLES

Critics hailed Thomas Couture's *Romans of the Decadence* (Figure 11.1) as an allegory of a corrupt regime when they saw it at the Salon of 1847. Following the 1848 Revolution, the painting seemed to predict the fall of Louis-Philippe's July Monarchy. It, along with David's *Oath of the Horatii* (Figure 2.8), forms a pair of bookends marking the end of two Bourbon regimes as well as the beginning and end of the Académie as a serious promoter of moral, patriotic behavior. In *Romans of the Decadence* the fussy, acanthus topped columns associated with ancient Rome replace David's austere architecture, and a crowded, chaotic orgy replaces the stoic altruism of the Horatii family. Despite its political critique, *Romans of the Decadence* passed the scrutiny of the Salon jury due to its conformity to academic standards of composition, execution, and title that situated the scene safely in antiquity. Had Couture (1815–79) titled it

Figure 11.1

Thomas Couture, *Romans of the Decadence*, 1847.
Oil on canvas, 442 × 772 cm
(15 ft 5 in × 25 ft 14 in).
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



“Masquerade at the Royal Palace,” the jury would never have accepted it and the government of Louis-Philippe would never have purchased it.

Interpreting *Romans of the Decadence* as a thinly disguised political critique seems justified in light of Couture’s biography. A student of Antoine-Jean Gros (Chapter 3), Couture failed to win the Prix de Rome after six attempts. This demoralizing experience led him to question academic principles, with their fetishistic conformity to a pre-established ideal. When Couture opened a private academy in the wake of publicity from the 1847 Salon, he encouraged pupils to follow their own impulses in cultivating style, technique, and subject matter. While private studio schools often prepared students for entry to the École, Couture discouraged his students from applying. Couture’s innovative instruction inspired the diverse approaches of his most famous students—Édouard Manet, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, and Eastman Johnson (Figure 6.6). At the same time as he condemned the Académie, Couture exhibited regularly at the Salon, beginning in 1840. This was more a matter of survival than choice; for many artists the Salon was their only means of publicity and, therefore, of survival and fame. Indeed, attendance at the Salon numbered in the hundreds of thousands each year, and the exhibition made a profit on entrance fees (Figure 11.2). Since Couture was an École student who exhibited regularly at the Salon his students enjoyed the ideal combination of personal freedom with a conduit to the exhibition that constituted the lifeline for most artists.

Significantly, also in 1847, the historian Jules Michelet gave a series of lectures at the Collège de France in which he identified youth as the salvation of decadent society. Rather than associating wisdom and expertise with age, he (like William Blake, Chapter 4) ascribed to it stubbornness, rigidity, and close-mindedness. This idea gained momentum, culminating with Art Nouveau (New Art) or Jugendstil (Youth Style), as it was called in the German-speaking world. The bright colors and pronounced surface texture of Couture’s paintings represented to some critics the rejuvenation of an exhausted academic tradition, a legacy of renewal a younger generation of artists would carry further.

The importance of titles is demonstrated further by the scandal caused by Auguste Clésinger’s *Woman Bitten by a Snake* (Figure 11.3) at the 1847 Salon. While the coupling of a snake with a nude woman could easily have been legitimized by a



What ideas about the 19th century did *Romans of the Decadence* convey by its placement in the newly opened Musée d’Orsay in 1987? Find out at www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos



Figure 11.2
Honoré Daumier, *Free Day at the Salon*, from the series *Le Public du Salon*, *Le Charivari*, 17 May, 1852, p. 10.

title such as “Eve and the Serpent,” Clésinger (1814–83) avoided such a hypocritical justification of nudity. In his 10 April 1847 Salon review for *La Presse*, critic Théophile Gautier expressed admiration for Clésinger’s boldness:

A young sculptor, M. Clésinger, who is now a great sculptor and has at his first attempt irresistibly captured the attention of artists, poets, and the public, has had the audacity, unheard of in our time, to exhibit without any mythological title a masterpiece which is neither goddess, nymph ... not oceanide, but quite simply a woman ... There has been no such original work of sculpture for a long time ... The quivering body is not sculpted, but molded; it has the texture and radiance of skin.

(Gautier 1847: 153–4)

Figure 11.3
Auguste Clésinger, *Woman Bitten by a Snake*, 1847. Marble, life-size. Musée d’Orsay, Paris.



The scandal surrounding *Woman Bitten by a Snake* is astonishing considering that the abundance of female nudes at the Salon gave it the appearance of a brothel, a situation to which Clésinger's depiction of the well-known socialite Madame Apollonie Sabatier in so bluntly erotic a pose contributed. Sabatier was a mistress of many men, including Napoleon III and Richard Wallace, founder of London's Wallace Collection. She held one of Paris's most stimulating salons on Sunday evenings at her apartment, attended by artists, intellectuals, musicians, and wealthy culture mavens, including the novelist Gustave Flaubert, the pianist and composer Hector Berlioz, and the painter Ernest Meissonier. La Présidente, as she was called, entertained Paris's male cultural, intellectual, and political elite in an exhilarating atmosphere of superb food, wine, cigars, and conversation. Yet by exhibiting a sculpture whose material (marble), subject (nude female), and refined execution conformed to academic standards, with a title that did not, Clésinger transgressed the boundaries of acceptability; he could have called it "La Présidente" for all the notoriety it attracted. The irony of a straightforward descriptive title triggering such antagonism reveals the fraudulence of the era's moral standards. Social norms condemned erotic pleasure, yet allowed them to exist as long as they remained below a certain threshold of visibility and were masked by acceptable, if transparent, labels.

HISTORY PAINTING AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY: COURBET

Gustave Courbet experienced a similarly conflicted relationship with the art establishment. Although he studied with pupils of Gros and David, Courbet maintained that he was self-taught. He never applied to the École, but instead copied old masters at the Louvre when he arrived in Paris, where his parents had sent him to study law in 1839. More radical than Couture, Courbet asserted that "every artist should be his own teacher." When asked in 1861 by disgruntled École pupils to be their teacher, Courbet consented, but warned that it would be more of a collaborative, interactive enterprise than they were accustomed to because "art is completely individual, and is, for each artist, nothing but the talent issuing from his own inspiration and his own studies of tradition." At the same time, it was essential for these young colleagues to agree with Courbet's conviction that "an epoch can only be represented by its own artists" and that "an object which is *abstract*, not visible, nonexistent, is not within the realm of painting" (Courbet 1966: 34–5).

Following years of rejection, Courbet began exhibiting at the Salon in 1844. *After Dinner at Ornans* (1848, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille) won a medal at the 1849 Salon, exempting Courbet from future juries. According to rules then in force, medal winners were entitled subsequently to exhibit any works they chose at the Salon, which explains how *Burial at Ornans* (Figure 10.2) was accepted. This rule did not apply to other state-sponsored exhibitions, however. At the Paris Exposition universelle (world's fair) of 1855, which included a retrospective of 35 paintings by the 56-year-old Delacroix, the exhibition committee selected 11 of Courbet's paintings for France's art section, and refused his request to include more. With an audacity unthinkable a generation earlier, Courbet constructed a private pavilion on the exhibition grounds (paid for by his patron Alfred Bruyas), which he called the Pavilion of Realism. This first solo exhibition of an artist's work held in connection with a world's fair included the 40 additional paintings refused by the French committee. Courbet proudly adopted the

critic Champfleury's designation of Realism, with its implication that academic art was artificial, fraudulent, and pretentious.

Burial at Ornans was displayed in the Pavilion of Realism, along with Courbet's most enigmatic and debated painting, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist* (1854–55, Figure 11.4). *The Painter's Studio*'s gigantic size, 19.5 × 12 feet (almost 6 × 3.5 meters), announced the megalomaniacal scale of Courbet's ambition. He went beyond Géricault, who made a history-painting-sized image of a government scandal (*Raft of the Medusa*, Figure 3.11) and his own *Burial at Ornans*, which elevated a local incident to a scale reserved for history. Here, the artist's own life is the focus of a painting whose scale demanded a public venue; it was the largest self-portrait ever painted. But what did it mean? Starting with the title, Courbet told viewers that it summarized his life as an artist since the revolutionary year 1848. In a similar way, Napoleon III initiated the 1855 Exposition universelle in order to publicize advancements made by France during his seven years of rule. Both men intended to show the world their positions of leadership. The only discrepancy was that Napoleon III was indisputably a world leader, and Courbet was not—not even in the world of art.

Courbet utilized a three-part composition, placing himself at the center, the only actively engaged figure (aside from the cat). He painted a landscape of his native Ornans (recognizable by the chalk cliffs), observed admiringly by a ragged boy—perhaps an allegorical representation of “the people”—and a nude model, her clothes in a heap. Seated in his Paris studio, Courbet paints a landscape visible only in—yet indelibly imprinted on—his imagination. He sympathized with the famous teacher Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran (1802–97, an *École* product and Salon regular) who felt that even art students should be free to express impressions from nature in whatever way they choose. Admired by Degas, Manet, Rodin, and Whistler, Lecoq's curriculum emphasized memory training, stressing careful observation and full immersion in nature as the basis for studio work (a strategy also pursued by Joseph Turner, Chapter 5). Lecoq's training also involved painting and drawing outdoors.

In behavior and speech, Courbet assumed the persona of an abrasive, independent, self-confident country bumpkin and man of the people, and it is this image he conveys in his painting. In *The Painter's Studio*, Courbet turns his back on



Figure 11.4

Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Life as an Artist*, 1854–55. Oil on canvas, 359 × 598 cm (11 ft 9 in × 19 ft 7 in). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

the nude model, the keystone of academic training. He described the painting in a January 1855 letter to his friend Champfleury vaguely enough to provide much room for speculation. Courbet described the two groups flanking him as “the common people, the misery, poverty, wealth, the exploited, the exploiter” on the left and “my friends, the workers, the art collectors” on the right (Bowness 1977: 135–37). Many, if not all, of the figures would have been recognized by savvy contemporaries. The figures on the right include the socialist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (who coined the phrase “property is theft”), Champfleury, who first described the trend to faithfully describe the facts of bourgeois and working-class life in art and literature as Realism, and Charles Baudelaire (seated reading). Baudelaire debuted as an art critic with an essay about the 1845 Salon and met Courbet in 1848; he considered Courbet’s social engagement regrettable. The identities of the figures on the left are less certain. They may represent generic types—a hunter, a Jew, a poor Irish woman, a priest, and a rag picker—or a heterogeneous assortment of specific individuals of various nationalities and convictions who failed to achieve their political and social objectives. Their discouraged demeanors contrast with the evident self-confidence of Courbet. Courbet’s placement of himself suggests that he felt himself a solitary maverick between, yet isolated from, these two worlds.

The painting can be interpreted as a real allegory of unfinished business; in fact, Courbet did not complete *The Painter’s Studio* according to contemporary norms—the studio setting is sketchy in comparison to the detailed figures. Within the painting, Courbet the artist still works on his landscape, Baudelaire and a young boy still read their book and newspaper. On the left, larger problems remain unresolved: ethnic and class harmony has yet to be achieved. Poverty (represented by a destitute nursing mother) has yet to be eradicated (a reminder to Napoleon III, author of *On the Eradication of Poverty*, 1844), as does suffering (represented by the male model hanging from a cross).

A comparison of *The Painter’s Studio* with Goya’s *Family of Carlos IV* (Figure 4.9)—a precedent for a painting of an artist in the act of painting with which Courbet was undoubtedly familiar—reveals a significant change in both the artist’s self-image and social role during the first half of the nineteenth century. Goya peers out from behind his canvas shrouded in shadow and pushed into a far corner. Although we see only a sliver of the painting’s back, we assume it is the Spanish royal family portrait we are looking at. In contrast, Courbet places himself at center stage absorbed in the act of painting, not in gazing at the viewer, as Goya does. Courbet does not hide behind his canvas, imply a visual trick with mirrors, or subordinate himself to anyone. Nothing is concealed: past, present, and future (represented by the boy) converge in an assemblage that is real in the sense that neglected aspects of social and political realities are portrayed. At the same time, Courbet stressed the reality of the creative and artificial process of painting in which a two-dimensional canvas is filled with colors, forms, and objects as determined by the artist. To stress this reality, Courbet included an implausible assortment of figures in a fictitious space that the artist chose to leave incomplete (especially the back wall). This is where Courbet had arrived since painting *The Stone Breakers* and *Burial at Ornans*. Courbet, however, was not alone in experiencing difficulties with the art establishment.



What did Delacroix think about *Painter’s Studio*?

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THE SITUATION OF WOMEN ARTISTS

Despite liberalization in some areas, both the École and Britain's Royal Academy (RA) enforced stricter rules against women after 1848. This reflected desperate efforts by men to assert control where they could through the separation of spheres. Excluded from most employment and higher education, young, middle-class women thirsted after stimulating, challenging, and meaningful activities. Since accomplishment in art and music were among the few socially acceptable skills they could acquire, demand for art and music training was high.

France established a state-funded drawing school for women after 1848, but in 1881, exasperated by the conservative and patriarchal art establishment, female French artists founded the Society of Women Painters and Sculptors and began organizing their own exhibitions. In England, the attempt to suppress women reached its most extreme under the reign of Queen Victoria, despite efforts by enlightened men like the philosopher John Stuart Mill, whose 1869 tract *On the Subjugation of Women* (written in collaboration with his partner, Harriet Taylor) argued for gender equality. Women were marginalized at best and excluded at worst. Following the death of Mary Moser (1744–1819), there were no women academicians at the RA, and in 1879 the RA banned membership to women. Excluded from the RA, women artists established their own organizations: the Society of Female Painters was founded in 1857.

"There are not two kinds of art, there is only one: it is the one which is based on timeless, natural Beauty. Those who seek elsewhere deceive themselves, and in the most fatal manner. What do these so-called artists mean when they preach the discovery of the 'new?' Is there anything new? Everything has been done, everything has been found. Our task is not to invent, but to continue. There is enough for us to do if, following the example of the great masters, we make use of those innumerable types which nature constantly offers us, if we interpret them with all the sincerity of our hearts and ennoble them through that pure and firm style without which no work has beauty."

Source: Lectures and correspondence of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres as recorded in Henri Delaborde, *Ingres, sa vie, ses travaux, ses doctrines* (Paris, 1870) ; translated and excerpted in Lorenz Eitner, *Neoclassicism and Romanticism 1750–1850*, vol. II, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970, pp. 133–4 .

Still, a handful of women artists thrived. For instance, Rosa Bonheur (1822–99), director of France's women's drawing school from 1849 to 1860, was critically and financially successful. Bonheur debuted at the 1841 Salon and won medals at the Paris Exhibitions universelles of 1855 and 1867; in 1865 she became the first woman artist awarded the Legion of Honor. Bonheur's success as an animal painter was remarkable considering her gender. She was fortunate because her artist-father, her first teacher, recognized and encouraged her talent. Bonheur also studied independently at the Louvre, where she copied paintings and sculptures. Her unmarried status and financial success facilitated her independence. Her unusual lifestyle, which included smoking a pipe, wearing men's clothing, and living with another woman, are often cited as indications of her lesbianism. While this may be true, there were also practical aspects to her choices: long, sweeping petticoats would get muddy at the markets and slaughterhouses, and the desire for independence from marital oppression did not necessarily reflect sexual preferences, nor did her desire for female companionship.



Figure 11.5

Rosa Bonheur, *The Horse Fair*, 1853–55. Oil on canvas, 244 × 496 cm (8 ft × 16 ft 7 in). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Bonheur's *The Horse Fair* (Figure 11.5) was a huge success at the 1853 Salon. It subsequently toured England (where Queen Victoria received a private viewing of the work at Windsor Castle) and the United States, where enthusiastic crowds paid admission. American railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt bought it in 1887 for 40,000 francs (about \$500,000 in today's currency) and donated it to the recently opened (1870) Metropolitan Museum of Art; a print edition brought *The Horse Fair* to less affluent admirers. *The Horse Fair* reveals how scale, subject, title, and treatment worked together to determine a work of art's acceptance. *Burial at Ornans*'s scale generated controversy as a monumental genre painting that dared to call itself a history painting. But unlike *Burial*, *Horse Fair* had obvious ties to tradition—to the spirited horses of Géricault (e.g., *The Race of the Riderless Horses*, 1817, J. Paul Getty Museum), and to the Parthenon frieze. The image of men controlling horses linked also to a symbolic tradition representing the mastery of humans over nature, as evidenced by David's equestrian portrait of Napoleon (Figure 3.5). These associations anchored Bonheur's image within the conventional parameters of pictorial tradition. The large scale (8 × 16.5 feet; 2.5 × 5 meters) of *Horse Fair* combined with near-photographic detail to induce a thrilling feeling of proximity. To achieve this, Bonheur made hundreds of studies, visiting livestock markets and slaughterhouses, and observing dissections. *Horse Fair* depicts a market in Paris specializing in horses such as the majestic white Percheron (a popular French breed of work horse) seen in the foreground.

SALON OF 1863 AND SALON DES REFUSÉS

The Salon des Refusés (Salon of the Refused) was an emergency solution authorized by Napoleon III, who wanted to placate artists infuriated by the rejection of their works from the 1863 Salon. Although Salon juries normally refused up to half of the works entered due to spatial constraints, accusations of favoritism were undoubtedly accurate. Many refused artists chose not to participate in the Refusés because they were concerned about the taint of rejection, but most considered any public exposure better than none. Seven thousand visitors came on the first day,

and the Refusés became more of a popular success than the Salon that year. The Refusés controversy also resulted in the 1863 reform of the École, which began officially, if reluctantly, to nurture individual expression; Delacroix, who died that year, would have been pleased.

Édouard Manet (1832–83) was one of the most innovative painters of the nineteenth century, a situation facilitated by financial independence. Manet studied with Couture as well as independently at the Louvre. Among the works he copied was *The Barque of Dante* (Figure 3.12) by Delacroix, to whom Manet paid a visit to request permission. Manet exhibited regularly at the Salon beginning in 1861, but many of his submissions were refused, not unusual for young artists who had yet to win a medal. The most notorious of these refusals was *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (literally “Luncheon on the Grass,” 1863, Figure 11.6). All three of Manet’s Salon submissions in 1863 were rejected and he decided to show them in the Salon des Refusés, conveniently located a turnstile away from the Salon exhibition.

Manet’s *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* provided a shocking contrast to conventional images by artists like Cabanel and Meissonier; it transgressed norms in many ways and its contradictions and ambiguities continue to inspire new interpretations. Part of Manet’s purpose was to emphasize the intrinsically artificial character of painting. First, there was a discrepancy between title and image. The painting’s original title was “The Bath,” and there does not seem to be much bathing going on, unless one counts the oddly positioned woman appearing to scoop up something from the water with her right hand while unsuccessfully holding her underclothes away from the water. The later title of *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (given prior to the painting’s inclusion in Manet’s pavilion at the 1867 Exposition universelle) was no more descriptive—the group seems to have no interest in eating, and even if they did, there isn’t much food—just some fruit spilling from a basket onto the woman’s discarded dress, a brioche lying unappetizingly on the grass, and oysters, reputed to have aphrodisiac qualities.



Figure 11.6

Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863. Oil on canvas, 206 × 269 cm (6 ft 9 in × 8 ft 10 in). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Then, as now, a gathering in a suburban park of nude women and clothed men would have been unusual. Strangeness was compounded by the men ignoring their nude female companion and each other. The gesticulating student (identifiable by his cap) addresses a couple that pays no attention even if they do hear what he is saying. Such a lack of interaction among actual people would seem implausible. The extreme artificiality of *Déjeuner* distanced it from Realism while its modern subject distanced it from academic values. Manet's interest in painting modern life was influenced by his friendship with Baudelaire, whom he met in 1855. In a series of articles published in the Paris daily *Figaro* during November and December 1863 (later published as "The Painter of Modern Life"), Baudelaire celebrated artists who captured the contingent aspects of beauty revealed by the fashions, morals, and emotions of an era.

At the same time, this complex and paradoxical work was anchored in tradition. In some ways, Manet's contribution can be understood as an updating of tradition in a manner similar to Renaissance artists who updated biblical imagery by painting the Holy Family in contemporary Renaissance attire and settings. Like his academic colleagues, Manet composed *Déjeuner* from separate sketches depicting figures, setting, and still life, but with a radically different result. For his composition, Manet turned to a well-known print by Marcantonio Raimondi of Raphael's drawing *Judgment of Paris* (c. 1515) and to Giorgione's *Concert* (c. 1508), which Manet had copied in the Louvre; the pyramidal arrangement of figures is reminiscent of Raphael's Madonnas. Furthermore, author and critic Émile Zola counted more than 50 paintings in the Louvre that included both clothed and nude figures. *Déjeuner* also responded to Courbet's *Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine* (Figure 9.12), which Manet saw at the 1857 Salon. Both paintings depict women of questionable virtue in a park setting with a rowboat anchored in the background. Manet, however, took Courbet's narrative one step further. He supplied the missing men (indicated in *Young Ladies* by a man's hat in the boat), and stripped one of the women of her clothes.

Critics were disturbed by other oddities as well. The uneven execution—as in Courbet's *Studio*, the background appears more as a sketchy theatrical backdrop—led many to consider the painting unfinished. The starkly lit nude seemed more appropriate to the artificial lighting of an artist's studio, and her flatness conflicted with the illusion of three-dimensionality in her surroundings. And the fellow beside her wears a skullcap that was strictly reserved for indoor wear at the time. As if this were not enough to agitate his audience, Manet directly referred to a scandal then rocking France. Around the time Manet was working on *Déjeuner*, a series of newspaper exposés disclosed that well-meaning provincial families, many of whom sacrificed economically to send their sons to the university in Paris, had no idea that instead of attending classes and studying, their sons were partying with prostitutes. *Déjeuner* confirmed these parents' biggest nightmare, and forced their confrontation with it by having the naked prostitute lock glances with the viewer. Manet thus distinguished himself by carefully conceiving a complex work with roots in tradition, references to modern society, and comments on the nature of painting as a series of conceptual and aesthetic choices made by the artist.

Typical of the paintings accepted by the 1863 Salon jury was Alexandre Cabanel's over life-size *Birth of Venus* (Figure 11.7). Cabanel (1823–99)—who had won the Prix de Rome in 1845 and became a professor at the Ecole in 1863—produced a stimulating display of female flesh similar in purpose and appearance to Clesinger's *Woman Bitten by a Snake*—evidence of the decisive importance of titles. Accompanied



Figure 11.7
Alexandre Cabanel, *Birth of Venus*, 1863. Oil on canvas, 132 × 229 cm (4 ft 4 in × 7 ft 6 in). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

by a joyous choir of chubby putti, this voluptuous Venus imagines a mythological event in what is technically a history painting, demonstrating that an appreciation for thinly disguised eroticism had changed little since the Rococo era. This painting functions as a kind of negative parallel to Courbet's *Studio* and Manet's *Déjeuner*: it creates a convincing illusion of reality from elements that are patently unreal—flying babies, floating nudes, depilated women, and Venus. Napoleon III purchased it for his personal collection and hung it in his private apartment in the Tuileries Palace, where he undoubtedly spent more time entertaining his mistresses than his prudish empress, Eugénie. Considered an exemplar of modern French art in official circles, *Birth of Venus* was included in the art section of the 1867 Exposition universelle.

Not all of the paintings rejected from the 1863 Salon appeared as obviously scandalous as Manet's *Déjeuner*. Indeed, American James Whistler (1834–1903) found himself confronted with the decision of whether or not to exhibit in the Salon des Refusés with a relatively decent image—*The White Girl*, now called *Symphony in White, No. 1* (Figure 11.8), a painting rejected by the Royal Academy in 1862. Although Whistler denied it, many thought it inspired by the recently published novel by Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (1860), which first reached the public when it appeared serially in the London journal *All the Year Round* in 1859–60. There, Collins described his character, the pale, white-clad Laura Fairlie (one of the novel's two virtuous women in white), as “The woman who first gives life, light, and form to our shadowy conceptions of beauty, fills a void in our spiritual nature that has remained unknown to us till she appeared” (Collins 1999: 52).

Whistler had studied drawing since childhood, and took art classes while enrolled at West Point Military Academy. He left for Paris in 1855, taking classes first at the Imperial and Special School of Drawing where Degas also was studying, and later in the studio of Gleyre, who exhibited regularly at the Salon during the 1840s and won a medal in 1845. Like Manet, Whistler first submitted a painting to the Salon of 1859; it was rejected because of its “Realism,” which probably meant lack of finish. One cannot be sure exactly how *White Girl* looked in 1863 because Whistler reworked the painting in 1867 to rid it of what he felt was Courbet's influence. *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* critic Paul Mantz's description of *White Girl* as a “symphony in white,” struck a responsive chord with the artist, who added the phrase to his title in 1867,



Figure 11.8

James Whistler, *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*, 1862. Oil on canvas, 244 × 137 cm (96½ × 53¾ in). National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

when the painting was finally exhibited at the Royal Academy, and he began to think of his paintings in relation to music. Mantz perceived that Whistler's concerns lay as much with intangible aesthetic concerns—balance, symmetry, the relationship among shapes and colors—as with subject matter: *Symphony in White* anticipated the Symbolist movement that emerged in the 1880s (Mantz 1863: 61).

By 1863, the lack of an identity for what appeared to be a portrait (Whistler's mistress Joanna Heffernan) no longer disturbed the French public, as it had when Gérault exhibited his *Wounded Cuirassier* (Figure 3.10) 50 years earlier. Whistler's portrayal of femininity synchronized with contemporary values: the girl is beautiful, clean, healthy, unpretentiously well dressed, and passive. Unlike Batoni's portrait of Josef II and Leopold II (Figure 1.11), surrounded by evidence of travel, *White Girl* poses in serene isolation. Her restraint contrasts with the animated expression of the bear, now the rug. On the one hand, *White Girl* can be interpreted as a symbol of the household virgin, dressed in white, symbol of purity, and holding a lily (associated with the Virgin Mary), her eyes avoiding engagement with the viewer's. For viewers familiar with Whistler's personal life, the dress becomes a costume, a mask concealing rather than revealing the subject's character. Art, like fashion, is a creation, not the transparent expression of a moral or visual truth.

Whistler belonged to an informal grouping of artists working in Britain referred to as the Aesthetic Movement. The Aesthetic Movement arose in the late



For more contemporary views on *White Girl* go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

1860s in reaction to detailed narrative paintings like Frith's *Railway Station* (Figure 7.14) and didactic Pre-Raphaelite paintings like Hunt's *Hireling Shepherd* (Figure 7.16). Its motto, "art for art's sake," can be interpreted as a selfish, elitist concept, but can also be understood in terms of specialization, with art's mission the fulfillment of its unique visual and emotive possibilities. Reacting to the noise, filth, and ugliness of modern urban life, Aesthetic Movement artists strove to produce beautiful objects intended to generate a sense of pleasure. Art critic John Ruskin elaborated on Aesthetic Movement objectives in his 1884 essay *The True and the Beautiful in Nature, Art, Morals, and Religion*, arguing that beauty possessed inherent moral value and could therefore elevate the human mind and soul. The idealized women of painters like Whistler fulfilled Aesthetic Movement criteria, as did the romanticized depictions of legend by artists like William Dyce (Figure 7.15). The most infamous event of Aesthetic Movement history was the 1878 libel suit filed by Whistler against Ruskin in 1878. In his review of an exhibition at London's Grosvenor Gallery in 1875, Ruskin accused Whistler of "throwing a pot of paint in the public's face." Considering the lack of detail in Turner's paintings, which Ruskin praised as truthful to nature, it seems strange that he objected so vehemently to Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (1875, Detroit Institute of Arts), the painting against which Ruskin's outrage was directed. Whistler was upset by the personal nature of Ruskin's attack and sued the critic in court. Although Whistler won, legal fees plunged him into poverty. Other important artworks at the 1863 Salon were far less controversial.

Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux's *Ugolino and His Sons* (Figure 11.9) won a first-class medal at the 1863 Salon. Napoleon III commissioned a bronze version, which



Figure 11.9
Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux,
Ugolino and His Sons, 1863.
Bronze. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

generated public interest. As a result, Carpeaux (1827–75) authorized production of small-scale replicas. *Ugolino* was Carpeaux's final submission to the École following 14 years of study. Upon his arrival in Paris in 1842, Carpeaux studied for two years with Rude (Figure 3.14), who advised him to enroll at the École to enhance his career possibilities. Carpeaux won the Prix de Rome in 1854 and sent a plaster model of *Ugolino* back to Paris in 1858. Painted in the eighteenth century by Reynolds (Figure 1.19), this tragic subject from Dante was familiar to educated audiences. Although *Ugolino* seems to conform to Academic norms, it disappointed his professors. Despite numerous precedents for nude male sculptures, *Ugolino* was an historical subject, and therefore should have been represented in correct historical attire. Probably inspired by Michelangelo in his decision to represent muscular, male nudes, Carpeaux expertly rendered the human form, winning approval of the École committee despite his transgression of Academic standards.

Sculpture was more conservative than painting for two main reasons: its primary market—government, church, and wealthy clients wanting portraits—did not change significantly during the nineteenth century and it was more expensive and difficult to produce. Patrons usually wanted accurate representations of specific individuals, thus reinforcing Academic emphasis on skillfully reproducing the contours of the human body and the texture and details of hair and clothing. The high cost of making sculpture resulted from the expense of raw materials (usually bronze or marble), transportation (of materials and final product), and the assistance needed to complete a sculpture. In the case of marble, this often included assistants who roughed out the contours of the sculpture, and for bronze, it meant foundry fees for casting. Consequently, innovation occurred within narrow parameters that are now difficult to appreciate.

Carpeaux's decision to render *Ugolino*'s tragedy with nude figures opened the possibility for using sculpture to interpret rather than simply represent history. With his chin cupped in one hand while gnawing on the fingers of the other, *Ugolino*'s posture suggests a figure deep in thought, like David's *Brutus* (Figure 2.9) or Rodin's *Thinker* (Figure 13.8). Surrounded by his weak and despairing sons, *Ugolino* expresses inner turmoil through a furrowed brow and tensed muscles. In its timeless nudity, *Ugolino* becomes a symbol of human suffering and the psychological torment of being faced with horrifying decisions.

SALON OF 1865

Two years after the Salon des Refusés, Manet's *Olympia* (1863, Figure 11.10) was accepted by the 1865 Salon jury, but no one is quite sure why because it was similarly scandalous. Like *Déjeuner*, it alluded to art past and present, as well as to contemporary Parisian life, and issues of colonialism and race. Manet based his composition on Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538)—the painting that peeks from behind the curtain in Hogarth's *The Tête à Tête* (Figure 1.3)—which Manet had copied during a visit to the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. Titian's nature is here condensed into a bouquet of hothouse flowers, his faithful puppy is transformed into a black cat of witches, bad omens, and eroticism (a reference appearing earlier in Goya's *The Dream / Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, Figure 4.8); a French legend relates that black cats are given by Satan to those who have surrendered their souls. Titian's two servants are



Figure 11.10
Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863.
Oil on canvas, 131 × 190 cm
(4 ft 3 in × 6 ft 2 in). Musée
d'Orsay, Paris.

collapsed into the dark-skinned maid. Like the naked model of *Déjeuner* (also modeled by Victorine Meurent), Olympia stares brazenly at the viewer, locking gazes.

Here, as in *Déjeuner*, the title was too ambiguous to satisfy contemporary audiences. This was exacerbated by Manet's references to recent art, which expanded the range of associations. Olympia's pose resembles that of the central reclining woman in his teacher Couture's *Romans of the Decadence*—a thematically appropriate reference—and also recalls Cabanel's *Venus*. Both Venus and Olympia are names with allusions to classical antiquity (the French version is Olympe), but the aura of dignity associated with the classical world conflicts with the brash sexuality of this body-as-commodity. Women engaged in the sex trade were often, like “La Présidente,” savvy businesswomen—fashionable, sometimes wealthy, but certainly independent, free from male control, and therefore threatening. Such self-sufficient, liberated women were an increasing presence in society and in literature.

Manet, like Greuze and David, was a theater enthusiast. He may have been inspired by Joseph Méry's opera *Herculaneum*, which opened at the Paris Opera in 1859 and was performed several dozen times by the time Manet painted *Olympia*. Its heroine, Olympia, was a Middle Eastern queen charged with stopping the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire, a mission she vowed to execute through murder and seduction. She fearlessly met a premature death when Vesuvius erupted in 79, putting an abrupt halt to her plan. Olympia represented the New Woman at her most threatening, since she possessed character traits that had been gendered male. *Olympia* may also have been inspired by the poem “La Malabraise” (a complicated title with multiple meanings, roughly translatable as “The Exotic, Bi-Racial Woman”) published in Baudelaire's collection *The Flowers of Evil* (1857):

*Beneath your satiny slippers,
Beneath your pretty silken feet,
I lay my ecstasy complete,
My genius and my destiny ...*

Olympia did inspire a poem, “Olympia,” written by Manet’s friend Zacharie Astruc in 1864:

*When, tired of dreaming, Olympia awakens
Springtime enters on the arms of the sweet black messenger.
It is the slave who, like the amorous night,
Comes to adorn with flowers the new day delightful to behold:
The august young woman in whom ardor is ever wakeful.*

(Flescher 1985: 34 n. 24)

For contemporary viewers, *Olympia* triggered ideas associated with erotic, Oriental fantasies, whose artificiality Manet signaled by his contrived composition and brash technique. The presence of a dark-skinned maid reinforced a dual interpretation as exotic harem and contemporary courtesan. It also evoked colonialist racial attitudes that associated whiteness with civilization and blackness with the primitive (Figure 6.14). Africans were perceived as more animal-like and sexualized, as was the case with Girodet’s *Monsieur Belley* (Figure 6.4). *Olympia*, on the other hand, appeared disturbingly modern, with an athletic physique and self-assurance that violated contemporary standards of feminine decorum, prostitute or not. Although painted in 1863, *Olympia*’s robust health contrasted with the cholera epidemic claiming the lives of thousands of Parisians in 1865, a reminder that it was not only Paris’s moral hygiene that needed improvement. As with *Déjeuner*, critics complained about the painting’s lack of finish—“the shadows are indicated by more or less large smears of monochrome,” commented Théophile Gautier (Manet 1983: 181). Critic Félix Deriège complained in his 2 June review in *Le Siècle*: “The white, black, red, and green create a frightful racket in this canvas; the woman, the negress, the bouquet, the cat, all the confusion of disparate colors, of impossible forms, seized the gaze and stupefies you” (Fried 1996: 331). Was Manet inept, or was this merely a sketch, they wondered? Artistic competency was judged by an artist’s ability to accurately render contours, pigments, and textures, an expectation Manet disregarded. *Olympia*’s body appears like a two-dimensional cut-out; Manet devoted more attention to shadows, sheet folds, and her shawl. Indeed, the embroidered flowers on the shawl are treated similarly to the flower in *Olympia*’s hair and those presented by the maid: daubs of paint on canvas. The author and critic Émile Zola was one of few who appreciated *Olympia*. In his 1867 essay “A New Style of Painting” Zola observed: “Manet asked himself why he should lie. Why not tell the truth? He has introduced us to *Olympia*, a girl of our own times, whom we have met in the streets pulling a thin shawl of faded wool over her narrow shoulders” (Cachin 1994: 146). *Olympia* conveyed mixed signals to contemporary Parisians: naked, female, and ensconced in a confined domestic space, she appeared disturbingly confrontational, self-confident, and professional.

Concerned that this landmark painting might wind up abroad, Claude Monet initiated a subscription in 1889 (after Manet’s death), to raise money to purchase *Olympia* and donate it to France. Within a year, sufficient funds had been collected. In his letter to the Minister of Public Instruction, published in France’s largest circulating newspaper *Le Figaro* on 7 February 1890, Monet argued for the acceptance of the donation:

The discussions that swirled around Manet’s paintings, the hostilities that they provoked have now subsided ... Not only did he play a large part

individually; he was the representative of a great and rich evolution as well. It therefore seems to us impossible that such a work should not have its place in our national collections, that the master is not represented where his disciples already reside. In addition, we have been concerned about the incessant movement of the market, the extraordinary purchases of works from us by Americans, the easily predicted departure for another continent of so many works of art that are the joy and the glory of France.

(Tucker 1990: 57)

Monet's letter reignited the Manet debate. Controversy notwithstanding, the French government accepted the donation, and hung *Olympia* in the Luxembourg Museum, where contemporary French art was then displayed.

Exhibited at the same Salon as *Olympia*, Gustave Moreau's *Thracian Girl Carrying the Head of Orpheus* (1865, Figure 11.11) provoked no critical outcry. Moreau (1826–98) studied at the École during the 1840s, and regularly submitted traditional historical subjects, but often chose gruesome moments. According to mythology, Orpheus lived a sad and solitary life following the return of his beloved Eurydice to the Underworld, and met his death when a band of maenads (female followers of Bacchus) tore the grieving musician limb from limb in an ecstatic frenzy. Magically, his head continued to sing as it floated on his lyre all the way to the Greek island of Lesbos.



Figure 11.11
Gustave Moreau, *Thracian Girl Carrying the Head of Orpheus*, 1865. Oil on canvas, 155 × 100 cm (5 ft 1 in × 3 ft 3½ in). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

With Poussinist attention to detail, Moreau represented the aftermath of this violent event, when one of the maidens cradled in her arms the decapitated head of the man she helped to destroy. As with David's *Horatii* (Figure 2.8), this specific event is nowhere described in literature, but constituted a plausible event imagined by the artist. Moreau envisioned an odd moment charged with conflicting associations of cruelty and contemplation. While Moreau's subject can be linked to escalating male anxieties about women and their perceived irrationality, it also seems rooted in his own troubled attitudes. Moreau never married, lived with his mother until her death in 1884, and held a low opinion of women, particularly women artists: "the worrisome intrusion of women in art would be a disaster without a solution." He condemned Mariya Bashkirtseva as "a pathetic, enthusiastic idiot, a pathetic excited concierge" (Moreau 2002: 331).

At first, *Orpheus* seems more traditional than *Olympia*, and in terms of technique and in its literary inspiration, it is. At the same time, it anticipated themes popular with Symbolist artists two decades later. Moreau projected an extreme mistrust of women who appeared deceptively docile. Behind an alluring façade of feminine charm might lurk a violent, ruthless, and uncontrollable nature dangerous to men. This contrasts with Manet's straightforward presentation of *Olympia*; devoid of pretension, the viewer sees her for exactly what she is. Negative attitudes toward women expressed in art and literature increased in frequency in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, music (the most perfect of all the arts) and severed heads with closed eyes (alluding to the supremacy of the mind over the body) became common motifs in Symbolist painting.

SCULPTURE AND POLITICS

Jules Dalou (1838–1902) thrived while studying with Lecoq de Boisbaudran (1852–54), but chafed under the strict École curriculum (1854–57). After failing to win the Prix de Rome four times, Dalou became a decorative sculptor, producing plasterwork for the homes of wealthy Parisians. In his free time, Dalou, a socialist and the son of working-class parents, defied convention by concentrating on genre subjects and a monument to workers. Winning a medal at the 1870 Salon launched Dalou's career, despite his subsequent eight-year exile from France in connection with his participation in the Commune (1871). Dalou's greatest achievement was a major public monument, *Triumph of the Republic* (Figure 11.12).

The Third Republic government that succeeded Napoleon III (forced to abdicate during the Franco-Prussian War, 1870), employed artists to produce public monuments for public parks and squares in France to establish the legitimacy of its regime. In fact, more public monuments were produced in France during the period 1871–1940 than at any comparable era in French history. Sculptors took advantage of this opportunity, including Dalou, one of 78 sculptors submitting models to the competition announced in 1879 for a monument to the new (1871) Republic. Although he did not win, influential friends got Dalou a commission to produce his submission, *Triumph of the Republic*, for the Place de la Nation, an even larger and more prominent site than awarded the competition winner, Léopold Morice (1846–1919) on Place de la République. Dalou estimated his budget at 210,000 francs, including clay, assistants, models for the figures, armatures, transportation, casting, and installation, but neglected to include a fee for his design and labor.



To see how these projects compare, see www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos



Figure 11.12
Jules Dalou, *Triumph of the Republic*, 1879–89. Bronze, over life-size. Place de la Nation, Paris.

Mindful of tradition, Dalou turned to the past—to the Baroque master Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) and Antoine-Louis Barye—for inspiration. The lions pulling the chariot carrying a female figure representing “Nation” derive from Barye’s 1833 *Lion Crushing a Serpent* (Figure 4.15), the sculpture initiating lions as symbols of the French citizenry. Nation herself closely resembles Delacroix’s *Liberty* (Figure 3.13), suggesting the proximity of these ideas under the Third Republic. And, in a nod to classical antiquity, her pose evokes the *Apollo Belvedere*. The Genius of Liberty, broken free from his chains, lights the way with a torch, while Labor (a muscular, shirtless worker wearing a leather apron and wooden sabots) and Justice guide the chariot, followed by Peace/Abundance, who distributes agricultural bounty. A troupe

of putti symbolizes Education, Equality, and Wealth. The vitality and movement of Dalou's monument rivals Bernini's famous *Fountain of the Four Rivers* (1648–51) in Rome's Piazza Navona. In his 28 September 1889 review for *L'Illustration*, L. Marc exclaimed, "it is a complete poem of the sculptor's art, of the century, of the French Revolution itself, whose highest aspirations and entire genius Dalou has clothed in admirable form ..." (Hunisak 1977: 225). With a crowd of more than 100,000 attending the monument's inauguration in November 1889, Dalou designed a work with popular appeal.

Utilizing female allegorical figures to represent ideas or concepts was a traditional strategy dating from ancient times. It was so effective that nineteenth-century artists including Delacroix, Dalou, and Auguste Bartholdi (1834–1904) continued to do it. Bartholdi's *Liberty Enlightening the World* (*Statue of Liberty*, Figure 11.13) was conceived by the sculptor and a group of Parisian intellectuals during the Second Empire (1852–70), a regime with stronger royalist than republican sympathies. Bartholdi's associates wanted to celebrate the common political heritage of France and America, which liberated themselves from tyrannical monarchies and founded republican forms of government. In the 1770s, France supported colonial revolutionaries with financial and military aid in the struggle against their common enemy, England. A century later, Bartholdi and his friends wanted to celebrate this friendship. Consistent with republican ideals, they wanted the gift to be from the French people to the American people—not from one government to another. To

Figure 11.13

Fredéric Bartholdi, *Liberty Enlightening the World*, 1884. Copper, height 46.2 m (151 ft 6 in). New York Harbor.



this end, they raised money through public subscription (voluntary contributions). Appropriately, it was not until the Third Republic (1871) that sufficient funds were available to realize the project.

Bartholdi, a republican, participated enthusiastically in the project from the outset. His final design consisted of a female allegorical figure in classical drapery who symbolized freedom. Her right hand holds the torch of enlightenment; her left, a tablet inscribed with the date of the Declaration of Independence (4 July 1776). *Liberty's* left foot tramples the chains of oppression. The seven points of her crown symbolize the seven oceans and continents. While *Liberty* commemorated revolution, it also conformed to Academic standards. Bartholdi's design was effective; the sculpture is perhaps the most famous public monument in the world.

The logistical difficulties of producing such a huge sculpture were formidable and required innovative thinking. A marble or bronze statue of that size would be too heavy, unstable, and expensive to produce. The sculpture had to be hollow and easy to assemble, which led Bartholdi to copper, an inexpensive, lightweight, and easily molded material. Still, the 150-foot-high sculpture required 31 tons of copper. Bartholdi enlisted the help of the engineer Gustave Eiffel, who designed the sculpture's iron and steel infrastructure (and several years later, the Eiffel Tower). *Liberty's* production was time-consuming: her right arm, from elbow to torch, was exhibited at the 1876 Philadelphia World's Fair, amazing the more than nine million visitors. Finally in 1884, *Liberty* was completed, arriving in New York the following year, disassembled into 350 pieces packed into 214 crates. In 1886, *Liberty* was erected on Bedloe's Island in New York harbor on a base funded by public subscription among American citizens. The dream of a collaborative gift from the people of one republic to another was realized.



Find out what President Grover Cleveland said at the *Statue of Liberty's* dedication ceremony at www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

FOREIGN ARTISTS IN PARIS

Given the deplorable situation in France and England, it is astonishing that women artists could thrive, although some, including Rosa Bonheur, did. The experiences of the Ukrainian painter and feminist Mariya Bashkirtseva (1858–84) shed additional light on the situation of women artists in the second half of the nineteenth century. Bashkirtseva came from an aristocratic family and spent her childhood traveling through Europe. Educated by private tutors, she arrived in Paris in 1877, and studied at the Académie Julian, which offered an education similar to that of the École (which excluded women until 1897). Bashkirtseva left 24 volumes of diaries, which she intended to publish. Through them, we know much about her life and ideas and the life of women artists in Paris during this period. Half a year before her first Salon exhibition in 1881, Bashkirtseva exclaimed in a 1 January 1880 diary entry: “Julian says that I draw ten times better than Manet!” a flattering compliment (Bashkirtseff 1985: 391). She befriended Jules Bastien-Lepage (Figure 10.4), whose detailed style influenced her own, as evidenced in *The Meeting* (Figure 11.14), exhibited at the 1884 Salon and purchased by the French government shortly after her death from tuberculosis.

Here, Bashkirtseva presented a genre scene of schoolboys (identifiable by their grey and black smocks), gathered at a Parisian construction site and examining an object held by the older boy. The schoolgirl in the background, alone and excluded, epitomized the situation of girls at the time. A sickly woman in a man's



To see Bashkirtseva's fantastic tomb in Passy Cemetery in Paris go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

Figure 11.14

Mariya Bashkirtseva,
The Meeting, 1884. Oil on
canvas, 193 × 177 cm
(6 ft 4 in × 5 ft 9½ in).
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



world, Bashkirseva also felt isolated. Salon visitors and critics admired *The Meeting*, a response facilitated by presenting the scene from the vantage point of a child—the viewer stands eye-to-eye with the boys—and by depicting these lower-class children as attentive, tidy, and rosy-cheeked, an idealized image palatable to the bourgeoisie. Bashkirtseva's brushless, quasi-photographic execution described this benign scene with a level of detail conforming to Academic norms. In *The Meeting*, Bashkirtseva conveyed an illusion of life in shabby working-class neighborhoods that, while idealized, coincided with the bourgeois preferences.

ART ACADEMIES IN AUSTRIA AND THE GERMAN STATES

The situation for artists in German-speaking territories was different than in England or France, because the directors of some of their most prestigious academies were rebels. Several were Nazarenes who had left the Vienna Academy in 1810 and moved to Rome (Chapter 4). One by one, most Nazarenes returned to Germany. Peter Cornelius directed the Düsseldorf Academy (1821–25), leaving to direct the Munich Academy (1825–40); Wilhelm Schadow succeeded Cornelius as director in Düsseldorf (1826–62); and Philipp Veit taught at the Frankfurt Academy (1830–43). These artists reformed the academies they led, instituting a more collaborative system of study based on the medieval master-pupil model that respected the students' individual talents and impulses, guiding and suggesting rather than dictating and demanding.

The Düsseldorf Academy closed during the Napoleonic occupation (1806–13), but reopened in 1819 with Cornelius arriving as director two years later. When he

left for Munich 1826, Schadow took over, transforming Düsseldorf into a center of art education second only to Paris in international importance. Schadow accomplished this by bringing with him from Berlin a team of talented and internationally acclaimed artist-teachers—specialists in history, genre, and landscape—whose subjects and styles reflected bourgeois taste. Aspiring artists such as the American Eastman Johnson and the Hungarian Mihály Munkácsy who sought a modern training preferred the Düsseldorf Academy to the Paris École or the London RA, mired as they were in the rut of tradition. In 1829, Schadow helped establish an art association in Düsseldorf (Rhenish-Westphalian Art Association). The Düsseldorf association spent 25 percent of its income on monumental projects—near and far, religious as well as civic—bringing art to the masses on an unprecedented scale. From the 1820s to the 1850s, Düsseldorf was a more harmonious, dynamic and progressive cultural center than Paris, with close collaboration among municipal art, theater, and music organizations (Felix Mendelssohn was the city's music director in the 1830s). The capital of Westphalia, Düsseldorf became part of Prussia in 1815, and grew into a major industrial center during the mid-nineteenth century, with the population quadrupling from 25,000 to 100,000 in the 50 years between 1830 and 1880.

Prior to his arrival in Düsseldorf in 1868, Mihály Munkácsy (1844–1900), an orphaned apprentice carpenter, studied first in his native Hungary, then at the academies in Vienna and Munich. In 1870, Munkácsy won a gold medal at the Paris Salon for his first version of *The Condemned Cell*, which catapulted him to international fame overnight and was produced in several versions (Figure 11.15). He spent the rest of his career in Paris, married a wealthy widow in 1871, and signed a contract with the dealer Charles Sedelmeyer in 1878, promising him all future production in exchange for a regular salary. In 1890, Munkácsy completed his biggest commission, monumental paintings for the Kunsthistorisches (Art History) Museum in Vienna. Thoroughly devoted to painting, Munkácsy never taught.

In *Condemned Cell*, the academically trained Munkácsy painted a typically Realist subject: a respectably dressed political prisoner awaiting his final meal on the night



Figure 11.15
Mihály Munkácsy, *The Condemned Cell II*, 1880.
Oil on canvas, 119 × 171 cm
(3 ft 10¾ in × 5 ft 7 in).
Hungarian National Gallery,
Budapest.

before his execution. Guard and prisoner gaze downward in somber reflection of the tragic situation. While ostensibly a genre subject, *Condemned Cell* had unmistakable political overtones for Hungarians, who interpreted the prisoner as a symbol of oppression by Austria. The 1867 success of Hungary in obtaining domestic autonomy from Austria probably led Munkácsy to reflect on his nation's three centuries of struggle under foreign domination. Munkácsy enhanced the drama by heightening light/dark contrast in a way that encouraged a sympathetic viewer response: Courbet, Wilhelm Leibl (Figure 10.14), and Ilya Repin (Figure 9.19) all expressed admiration for *Condemned Cell*. In the context of France, where Munkácsy painted and exhibited *Condemned Cell*, the subject suggested the helpless dignity of a France locked in a losing battle with a newly united Germany.

Under the directorship of William Kaulbach (1805–74), beginning in 1849, and his successor Karl von Piloty, who took over in 1874, the Munich Academy became central Europe's leading art school. Under the rule of the Wittelsbach family since 907, the Kingdom of Bavaria (a feudal system with an agrarian economy) did not experience (prior to unification in 1871) the radical economic, political, or social changes experienced by Britain or France (unless one includes the 1848 abdication of King Ludwig I in the wake of a scandal precipitated by his public liaison with Irish dancer Lola Montez). Ludwig I was a connoisseur and enthusiastic supporter of the arts who, until his death in 1868, was one of the nineteenth-century's greatest art collectors. He established three museums to house his collections—classical art in the Glyptothek (1830), old masters in the Alte Pinokothek (1836) and contemporary art in the Neue Pinokothek (1853), and hired leading architects (Leo von Klenze and Friedrich von Gaertner) and artists (Cornelius and Schnorr von Carolsfeld) to design and decorate them. Ludwig I was progressive and open-minded, as evidenced by his employment of the renowned Naturalist landscape painter Georg von Dillis (1759–1841) as his art advisor and by his membership in the Munich Art Association. Ludwig I supported exhibitions at the Academy and the Art Association by economic subvention and by purchasing artworks.

The predilection for effective organization that culminated with German unification emerged in the establishment in 1854 of a kind of super-art association, the League for Historical Art (*Verbindung für historische Kunst*). League membership included art associations and governmental institutions, but also interested members of the nobility. The League commissioned paintings that toured German states before being engraved in limited print editions and acquired by a league member through a lottery. In 1856 the first national artists' organization was established, the General German Art Guild (*Allgemeine Deutsche Künstlergenossenschaft*). Its purpose was to protect artists' rights, arrange exhibitions, and cultivate a German cultural identity. In 1858 the Guild, the Art Association, and the Munich Academy collaborated on the National Historical German Art Exhibition—a cooperation of academic and independent artists unthinkable in France or Britain. Held in Munich's newly constructed *Glaspalast* (a glass and iron structure modeled on London's Crystal Palace), the German Art Exhibition attracted visitors from around the world. More than 1,500 works displayed the development of modern German art for the first time, beginning with Friedrich (Chapter 5), and Runge (Chapter 4). The exhibition was path-breaking for three reasons: (1) its partnership among customary adversaries, (2) its coherent overview of a nation's art during the most recent half-century, and (3) its effort to formulate a generic national identity based on a common cultural heritage.

While the failure in 1848 of the democratically elected German National Assembly to draft a constitution acceptable to all German states demonstrated that Germans were not yet prepared to unite, the 1858 exhibition indicated progress on this front. Following Napoleon's consolidation of German states from several thousand to 39 in 1806, and the creation of a pan-German customs association in 1834, the National Historical German Art Exhibition was an important step toward national unification. It provided a conceptual framework for understanding the dynamic interrelationships of German cultural production as a coherent whole.

Contemporary works in the 1858 National Exhibition included Karl von Piloty's *Seni by the Corpse of Wallenstein* (1855, Figure 11.16), which created a sensation three years earlier at the Munich Industrial Exhibition. Piloty (1826–86) taught at the Munich Academy beginning in 1856, becoming director in 1874. Inspired by Friedrich Schiller's *History of the Thirty Years' War* (1790) and play, *The Death of Wallenstein* (1798–99), Piloty depicted the 1634 murder of General Wallenstein during the Thirty Years' War, an event foreseen by his astrologer, Seni. The Thirty Years' War was a religious debacle in which dozens of Catholic and Protestant rulers fought for control of central and northern Europe in a series of shifting alliances, annihilating half of the German population in the process. Wallenstein was a Czech mercenary employed by Austria's Holy Roman Empire. Fearing his growing power and influence, Emperor Ferdinand II had Wallenstein murdered by Irish mercenaries.

Like a conscientious Academician, Piloty strove for accuracy in costume and setting, relying on Schiller's descriptions and his own research. Audiences were positively impressed by the photographic realism and authentic details like smoke rising from the just-snuffed candle, a none-too-subtle reference to Wallenstein's murder. Ludwig I purchased *Wallenstein* for his Neue Pinokothek. The subject seemed pertinent to German efforts to articulate a common national history and to contemporary economics. Like Hunt's *Hireling Shepherd* (Figure 7.16), *Wallenstein*



Figure 11.16
Karl von Piloty, *Seni by the Corpse of Wallenstein*, 1855.
Oil on canvas, 318 × 370 cm
(10 ft 5 in × 12 ft 2 in).
Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

addressed the topical issue of mistrust of wage laborers. As markets expanded and enterprises grew, employers were forced to pay strangers for tasks formerly entrusted to family members and acquaintances. These relationships were characterized by weaker bonds of trust and accountability that many found worrisome.

After the successful 1858 German Art Exhibition, the Munich Academy relinquished exhibition organizing to the Guild, which arranged Germany's first international Salon in 1863. The second international Salon in 1869 established Munich as an international art capital, displaying works by Camille Corot, Courbet, Manet, and Monet. Critics noted the broad, visible brushwork and luminosity of these works, associating them with a distinctively French temperament. Style, in the German critical discourse, became directly connected to national character. French artists were described as flighty, impatient, and undisciplined in contrast to German artists, whose more precise execution seemed to confirm a temperament distinguished by technical mastery, diligence, and order. This artificially constructed dichotomy broadened into an unbreachable chasm in the years leading up to World War I. When the Art Guild exhibitions of 1889 and 1891 discriminated against (French) Impressionism and Symbolism, more than 100 artists banded together to establish the rival Secession in 1892.

Piloty's star pupil was Hans Makart (1840–84), history painting professor at the Vienna Academy beginning in 1879. His studio, a meeting place for Viennese high society, represented a trend among enterprising artists: transforming studios into informal settings for socializing as well as making and selling art. Studios were frequently open on a weekly basis, functioning as updated salon gatherings. Opulently furnished with oriental rugs, overstuffed furniture, and exotic costumes, Makart's studio exerted an extraordinary influence on the taste of Vienna's bourgeoisie and made him a local celebrity.

Makart's masterpiece, *Entry of Emperor Karl V into Antwerp* (Figure 11.17), a mammoth 17 × 31 feet (5 × 9.5 meters), was unveiled at Vienna's Artists' House (*Künstlerhaus*) in 1878. A popular success the likes of which the Viennese art world has not seen before or since, *Entry of Emperor Karl V into Antwerp* attracted 40,000 visitors the first five days it was on view. In a subject based on an eye-witness description by Albrecht Dürer, Makart combined Academic principles with fashionable ostentation. He depicted an actual event, relied on contemporary description, rendered costumes

Figure 11.17
Hans Makart, *Entry of
Karl V into Antwerp*, 1878.
Oil on canvas, 520 × 952 cm
(17 ft × 31 ft 3 in). Kunsthalle,
Hamburg.



with historical precision, made numerous preparatory sketches, and arranged his composition according to Academic rules. At the same time, Makart created a sensational spectacle by including portraits of Vienna high society, for whom this act of immortalization (even if nude) was a status symbol. In *Entry of Emperor Karl V into Antwerp*, timeless academic values intersected with crass materialism and status-seeking. A Spanish prince, Karl V inherited The Netherlands, Luxembourg, and part of France in 1506, part of Spain in 1516, and Austria in 1519. Through bribery, he succeeded his grandfather Maximilian I as Holy Roman Emperor. Makart represented the moment of Karl V's triumphal return to The Netherlands, his birthplace, after years abroad. Karl V is best remembered for outlawing the teachings of Martin Luther in the 1521 Edict of Worms; the image thus affirms the Roman Catholic allegiance of Austrian emperors. Religion and national borders were certainly on the minds of the Viennese ruling class, since Austria was one of the parties (along with Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Ottoman Empire, and Russia), at the 1878 Congress of Berlin, which recognized the sovereignty of Montenegro, Serbia, and Romania.

Country	1750	1800	1850	1900
France	—	—	33.5	67.9
Germany	—	—	9.5	61
Great Britain	—	6.6	28	80.1
Italy	—	—	—	61
Russia	—	—	—	63
Spain	—	—	20.7	80.7

Data Box 11: Industrial Production

Based on an index in which 100 was the productivity in 1913

Following the War of Liberation (from Napoleon), new art organizations arose. In 1814, the Berlin Artists' Association (*Berlinischer Künstler Verein*) began as a weekly artists' meeting, and in 1825 a group of younger artists formed the Association of Young Berlin Artists (*Verein Jünger Berliner Künstler*). When Cornelius assumed directorship of the Berlin Academy in 1841, his admirers started the Association of Berlin Artists (*Verein Berliner Künstler*) with which the Artists' Association eventually merged. In the wake of unification, the Association of Berlin Artists assumed a leading role, organizing regular exhibitions to market members' works to Berlin's increasingly affluent bourgeoisie. Beginning in 1871, the newly formed German Empire eagerly participated in world's fairs, anxious to demonstrate its leadership in culture, industry, and science. At the 1878 Paris Exposition universelle, Wilhelm I gave Berlin Academy director Anton von Werner (1843–1915) a free hand in organizing Germany's art section. Ostentatious galleries furnished like bourgeois domestic interiors displayed works, including Menzel's *Rolling Mill* (Figure 9.17), by leading German artists. Von Werner became concurrent director of the Association of Berlin Artists, giving him tremendous power in the German art world until after the turn of the century.

Like Menzel, Werner produced numerous paintings of contemporary German history at the request of Wilhelm I. Like any new nation, Germany required propagandistic images demonstrating its legitimacy by anchoring it in the national past and by creating a credible narrative of noble deeds in the present. The Franco-Prussian War, Germany's final incentive for unification, presented one of the first

Figure 11.18

Anton von Werner, *Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm with the Corpse of General Douay at the Battle of Wissembourg*, 1870. Oil on canvas. Schloss Hohenzollern, Germany.



opportunities. In *Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm with the Corpse of General Douay at the Battle of Wissembourg* (1870, Figure 11.18), Werner showed the French general, a veteran of the Crimean War, killed in action in August 1870 near Landau, a town northwest of Stuttgart. Douay lies on a makeshift bier with his faithful dog lying on his legs, a sentimental motif reminiscent of Landseer's *Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner* (Figure 10.1). Despite the illusion of documentary exactitude, *General Douay* blended fact and fiction in a manner similar to West's *Death of Wolfe* (Figure 3.1). Like West's painting, Werner's was commissioned and executed more than a decade after the event, and painted by an artist who was not an eye-witness. Both West and Werner conceived compositions more responsive to political expediency than to journalistic truth and included portraits of individuals absent from the event. Werner emphasized Friedrich Wilhelm's importance by situating the tall, dignified, and introspective ruler at center and giving him an expression suggesting wisdom and humility.

MENZEL AND ACADEMIC REALISM

Adolf von Menzel exemplified the status artists had in Germany; he achieved international acclaim and star status at home, verified by the award of a noble title in 1898 entitling him to add "von" to his surname. Devoted to his art, Menzel never taught nor had known romantic relationships. He exhibited at (and visited) the Exposition universelle of 1855, and initiated a lifelong friendship with Meissonier during the French artist's 1862 visit to Berlin. When he exhibited at the 1867 Exposition universelle in Paris, Menzel won a second-place medal. The art critic Edmond Duranty wrote often and enthusiastically about Menzel in the French press, and in 1885 Menzel had a one-man show in the Paris City Pavilion. When he died in 1905 Menzel's funeral arrangements were supervised personally by Emperor Wilhelm I.

Menzel's artistic breakthrough occurred with his 376 wood engraved illustrations to Franz Kugler's *History of Friedrich the Great*, initially issued as single chapters beginning in 1840, published in its entirety in 1842, and reprinted 13 more

times before 1900. Menzel, although he considered himself a Realist, would have disputed Courbet's assertion that only contemporary subjects were worth painting. With the enthusiasm of an archaeologist, Menzel studied the eighteenth century, reading numerous historical accounts of Prussian King Friedrich II ("the Great", 1712–86), carefully studying uniforms, objects, and settings to accurately recreate this era. In mid nineteenth-century Germany, Friedrich the Great was perceived as a liberal Enlightenment leader who encouraged tolerance and intellectual freedom. His victories in the War of Austrian Succession (1740–48) and the Seven Years' War (1756–63) evidenced the potential of Germany to realize its status as a great power—culturally and politically. Fascination with Friedrich the Great also manifested nostalgia for an era perceived as genteel and cultured during a competitive period of industrial growth.

Inspired by the Kugler book's popularity, Menzel produced paintings in the 1850s of Friedrich the Great's life. *The Flute Concert at Sanssouci Palace* (1850–52, Figure 11.19) shows the versatile ruler in his preferred role as musician. Kugler noted that "the hour before dinner was usually filled with concerts in which Friedrich played on his favorite instrument, the flute" (Kugler 1842: 185). An accomplished flautist, Friedrich also composed, writing more than 100 flute sonatas and a symphony. Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach, seen here seated at the harpsichord, was a member of his court—musical entertainment was a highlight of Prussian court life. Menzel showed the Emperor at center stage, flanked by his wife and mother, in an after dinner concert at Sanssouci, his summer palace situated on the outskirts of Potsdam (Figure 5.16). Committed to Realism in every detail, Menzel constructed a stage set in order to study the effects of candlelight. He combined this with a feathery, Rococo style of painting appropriate for the time period he represented. At the time of its execution, *Flute Concert*, along with Menzel's other Friedrich the Great paintings, was considered inconsequential historical genre; however after German unification in 1871, it was reinterpreted as a patriotic glorification of Germany's past, catapulting Menzel into the national limelight.



Figure 11.19
Adolph von Menzel, *The Flute Concert at Sanssouci Palace*, 1850–52. Oil on canvas, 142 x 205 cm (4 ft 8 in x 6 ft 8 in). Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

WORLD'S FAIRS

New international exhibition opportunities opened in the second half of the nineteenth century with the advent of world's fairs. These provided a forum for nations to define and position themselves in a globalizing world. The number of participating nations, exhibitors, and visitors soared during this period: from 17,000 exhibitors and six million visitors at London's Crystal Palace exhibition in 1851, to 83,000 exhibitors and almost 51 million visitors at the Paris Exposition universelle of 1900. Exhibitions were generally open for between five and seven months (including the summer), and charged admission, usually substantially reduced one day a week to attract the working classes. Half of the exhibitors generally came from the host nation, with the remainder comprising several large nations (Austria, England, France, Ottoman Empire, Prussia/Germany, Russia, Spain, United States) and a shifting group of smaller ones.

The story of world's fairs begins with the Crystal Palace exhibition, initiated by Prince Albert. Officially referred to as the Great Exhibition, its purpose was to demonstrate British superiority through the display of innovations in industry, science and technology, agriculture, art, and its vast colonial possessions. Participation of other nations was intended to reinforce British preeminence, but mostly it provided an opportunity for visitors to learn about places near and far and about the vast changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution. Because the Crystal Palace exhibition was a critical, financial, and popular success Napoleon III organized a similar event in Paris in 1855, intended to be bigger and better. The 1855 Exposition universelle counted 24,000 exhibitors, almost half of them French, and five million visitors. In addition to the categories in 1851, the 1855 fair included sections on fishing, hygiene, medicine, photography and an overview of French art since 1800. It was in conjunction with this that Courbet erected his Pavilion of Realism on the edge of the fair grounds.

London mounted another exhibition in 1862 with 30,000 exhibitors and six million visitors. It included an extensive colonial section, complete with imported villages and natives engaged in typical activities—a kind of temporary open-air museum of exotic cultures designed to demonstrate how “primitive” regions thrived under the wise and benevolent rule of European colonial powers. The European perception of colonialism naturally differed from that of the colonized peoples whose lands were stripped of natural resources, populations decimated by European diseases, and ways of life disrupted by forced conformity to Westernized ways of life. France responded in 1867 with its next Exposition universelle, during which both Courbet and Manet held independent exhibitions. Britain held world's fairs in London every year between 1871 and 1874, with Austria (Vienna) joining the trend in 1873 and the United States (Philadelphia) in 1876.

France's first Exposition universelle following its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1878) was intended to validate France as a progressive world power. The significant role played by art in displaying France's preeminence is indicated by the location of the art pavilion at the Exposition's center. Although the 1880s witnessed a proliferation of world's fairs with nations such as Australia, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Spain mounting world's fairs, France's 1889 Exposition, with almost 62,000 exhibitors and 30 million visitors, was the largest yet. Many South and Central American nations participated, as did Persia (Iran) and Siam (Thailand). Some nations ruled by monarchies (Britain, Sweden) refused to participate officially because the Exposition marked the centennial of the French Revolution. There were

pavilions devoted to machines, forestry, war, Paris, gas, children, the sea, and food, and France organized a large display of its colonies. People were most fascinated by the inhabited villages from Caladonia, Gabon, Java, and Senegal, with as many as 60 villagers engaged in everyday tasks. Visitors felt they gained first-hand knowledge of exotic cultures, and artists were among those who inferred that these villagers lived a happier and less complicated life than Westerners. The 1889 Exposition was also the most musical of world's fairs, including performances by Javanese gamelan groups and the Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. The diverse musical offerings influenced French music and coincided with escalating interest in music among artists and writers. The best known aspect of the Exposition, however, was the Eiffel Tower (1024 feet; 312 meters; Figure 11.20), the tallest structure in the world until the completion of the Empire State Building in 1931 (1453 feet; 443 meters). As an extraordinary feat of engineering it exemplified creative innovation, and as an iron structure it announced France's position as a leading industrial nation. French journalists united in concluding that the 1889 Exposition demonstrated that the world, and France in particular, was securely on the road to modernity and progress, achieved through diligence, education, and innovation.



Figure 11.20
Gustave Eiffel, *Eiffel Tower*,
1889, Champs de Mars, Paris.
From J. Illiff, *A Photographic
Trip Around the World*, 1890.

CONCLUSION

Like any bureaucracies, state-sponsored art academies were slow to change, and often the changes were too little and too late. The influence of Nazarene artists and the culturally progressive tendencies of many German states made this less true in Germany than elsewhere. The situation was complicated by the fact that artistic prestige and achievement continued to be measured by success at official art exhibitions such as the annual RA shows and the Salon. Depending on their interests, temperament, and financial situation, artists chose paths of conformity or rebellion, or one of numerous possibilities in between. Clearly, however, artistic preferences were becoming increasingly divergent. Independently minded artists and adventurous collectors turned to the alternative venues of private exhibitions and art galleries, making it ever easier for artists to survive outside the academic system. At the same time, artists—who often worked in solitude—increasingly formed associations. While the need for social interaction, creative stimulation, and professional interaction did not abate at the end of the nineteenth century, the ways in which they were achieved became ever more temporary and diverse.



For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter and pictures of the Paris Opera and Sanssouci Palace go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.

Impressionism

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Paris was the world's undisputed cultural capital. A dynamic environment generated by economic prosperity, urbanization, and political instability fostered freedom, creativity, innovation, and a modernist disregard for the past. Impressionism exemplified this modern attitude. The Impressionists considered academic formulas obsolete and yearned to create art expressing their individual ideas, feelings, and interests. They strove to develop styles specifically suited to their purposes. For some, this entailed studying natural phenomena, often aided by scientific treatises on color and optical theory. For others it meant documenting the appearance, habits, and values of the time or influencing viewers' thinking and behavior through persuasive images. The term Impressionism is often uncritically applied to several contiguous but not congruent concepts: an exhibiting organization (eight exhibitions held between 1874 and 1886), a style/technique, and an artistic intention—devotion to dispassionately recording modern life as the artists themselves lived it. Most of the Impressionists came from bourgeois backgrounds, were financially independent (or had family support), and refused to conform to parental expectations to become bankers (Degas), doctors (Bazille), or lawyers (Caillebotte, Monet), although all of them sought validation by the Salon. Like entrepreneurs in other fields, Impressionists explored innovative approaches to their profession. They looked with fresh eyes at the purpose, subject matter, and technique of painting, and felt that their world was decisively different from that of their parents.

Industrialization and urbanization accelerated throughout the nineteenth century. Despite mass emigration, the populations of Britain, Germany, Poland, and Russia increased about 30 percent, with millions of young people moving to urban areas—especially to Berlin and Paris. In cities, new ways of life evolved that differed vastly from the rural, traditional life of earlier generations. In his 1866 account of modern life, *The Parisian Hours*, Alfred Delvau described this new attitude: “It is better to die at thirty in Paris than to reach one hundred in a village” (Delvau 1866: 5). Comfort, modernity, and novelty replaced utility, tradition, and familiarity as desirable qualities. Countries vied for superiority at world's fairs and the world appeared increasingly callous and competitive in apparent fulfillment of social Darwinist Herbert Spencer's “survival of the fittest” theory.

First Impressionist Exhibition, 1874	30 artists, 165 works	<i>Artists included:</i> Boudin, Cézanne, Degas, Monet, Morisot, Renoir
Second Impressionist Exhibition, 1876	20 artists, 252 works	<i>Artists included:</i> Caillebotte, Degas, Monet, Morisot, Renoir
Third Impressionist Exhibition, 1877	18 artists, more than 230 works	<i>Artists included:</i> Caillebotte, Cézanne, Degas, Monet, Morisot, Pissarro, Renoir
Fourth Impressionist Exhibition, 1879	15 artists, 246 works	<i>Artists included:</i> Caillebotte, Cassatt, Degas, Gauguin, Monet, Pissarro
Fifth Impressionist Exhibition, 1880	18 artists, 232 works	<i>Artists included:</i> Caillebotte, Cassatt, Degas, Gauguin, Morisot, Pissarro
Sixth Impressionist Exhibition, 1881	13 artists, 170 works	<i>Artists included:</i> Cassatt, Degas, Gauguin, Morisot, Pissarro
Seventh Impressionist Exhibition, 1882	8 artists, 198 works	<i>Artists included:</i> Caillebotte, Gauguin, Monet, Morisot, Pissarro, Renoir
Eighth Impressionist Exhibition, 1886	17 artists, 246 works	<i>Artists included:</i> Cassatt, Degas, Gauguin, Morisot, Pissarro, Redon, Seurat

Data Box 12: Impressionist Exhibitions

Source: Charles S. Moffett, *The New Painting: Impressionism 1874–1886*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1986.

TRUTH

Gustave Courbet and Édouard Manet inspired the Impressionist generation to shift from depicting academic subjects and recording nature to describing their ever-changing social environment. Impressionism is best defined by its purpose—depicting ordinary events from the realm of the artist’s personal world—than by its technique, subject matter, or professional organization. Representing the world in which they lived was the common link among artists who had vastly differing technical approaches. The Impressionists, like artists before them, wanted to paint truthfully. Hogarth, Greuze, Géricault, Perov, Cruikshank, and the Pre-Raphaelites all in their various ways sought to reveal social truths with the goal of generating reform. Similarly, Boilly, Constable, and Biedermeier artists attempted to record accurately the appearance of everyday life. Thus, truth in painting had long been a major concern of artists in terms of visual perception and emotional, psychological, and social realities. However, definitions of truth, which truth was important to represent, and how best to communicate it, changed in tandem with historical circumstances and reflected, to an increasing extent, the temperaments and experiences of individual artists.

HAUSSMANNIZATION

Paris was the European capital that underwent the most radical change in the late nineteenth century. Between 1870 and 1900, Paris’s population grew from 1.8 to 2.7 million with only ten percent of this growth due to new births; 90 percent of it resulted from migration. An average of 27,000 new inhabitants per year arrived in Paris, and by 1890, only 30 percent of its population had been born there, compared with 60 percent in London. Paris also had the lowest marriage rate in the West, with 30 percent of those that did marry remaining childless. In 1870, 60 percent of existing buildings and streets had been constructed during the preceding 20 years. During

this period, almost 30,000 residential buildings were demolished (many centuries old) while almost 100,000 new ones were built. The medieval heart of Paris, Ile de la Cité, was transformed into an administrative center with 75 percent of its inhabitants permanently displaced. This urban renewal project was the largest ever and the first financed through deficit spending—by 1870, 40 percent of the Paris city budget consisted of interest payments on municipal bonds. An ambitious undertaking of unprecedented immensity, this enterprise made Paris the center of modernity, just as its initiator, Napoleon III, had hoped. At the same time, Paris became a city of strangers, the vast majority of whom were uprooted recent arrivals. Impermanence and uncertainty were catalysts for artistic innovation.

When Napoleon III declared himself Emperor in 1851 after three years as France's president, many welcomed the stability a ruler-for-life seemed to promise. To secure his regime, provide infrastructural improvements for a rapidly growing metropolis, and to dazzle the world with a sophisticated hub of pleasure and entertainment, Napoleon III entrusted Baron Georges Haussmann, Prefect (director) of the Seine district, to produce a comprehensive plan for Paris. The resulting transformation is referred to as "Haussmannization." Marketed as a beneficial project, many aspects of Haussmannization enhanced the lives of ordinary citizens: buildings had more light and fresh air, miles of new sewers and aqueducts were constructed, Paris's park spaces increased ten-fold, 25 new city squares appeared, gas streetlights were installed to enhance safety and facilitate evening commerce, and the construction industry boomed. The water supply to Paris increased five-fold between 1850 and 1865, and hygiene was improved by obtaining water from uncontaminated sources in the countryside rather than the polluted Seine (a factor leading directly to lower mortality rates). The cholera epidemic of 1849 convinced bureaucrats as well as ordinary citizens that overcrowding and inadequate sanitation were pressing social issues that required immediate solutions.

"Many people attribute decadence in painting to moral decadence. This bias against artists' studios that has circulated among the public is a poor excuse for artists. Because they are interested in constantly representing the past, their task is easy, and their laziness justified. It is true that the grand tradition is lost, and that the new one is not yet formed ... Before researching that which might be the heroic aspect of modern life, and proving by examples that our era has just as many sublime motifs as in ancient times, one can confirm that all centuries and all peoples have had their beauty, and we certainly have ours. This is as it should be ... Thus there is a modern beauty and heroism! Parisian life is full of poetic and wonderful subjects. The wonderful surrounds us and fills us like air; but we don't see it."

Source: Charles Baudelaire, "De l'héroïsme de la vie modern," *Salon of 1846*, David Kelley, ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, pp. 180–82.

Nonetheless, civic-minded altruism was less a factor in Haussmannization than egotistical ambition. Napoleon III wanted to transform Paris into a more modern world capital than London (where he lived during the late 1830s and 1840s) and to thwart revolutionary throngs in case of insurrection. Paris's insurgents typically occupied important public buildings and built barricades on narrow streets, where they trapped government troops and attacked them from above. Wide boulevards were constructed as much for military purposes as to ease traffic congestion.

Boulevards connected strategic points such as hospitals and railway stations to the city center, facilitating the rapid mobilization of troops and easing the commute to Paris's commercial district.

Napoleon III and Haussmann carried out a cultural, physical, and social cleansing of Paris. From the 1850s to the 1880s, central Paris was the world's largest construction site. In the clash between historic preservationists and an alliance of real estate speculators and construction entrepreneurs, the latter won, becoming rich in the process. In the 1860s, a decade after Haussmannization began, the Paris City Council's Permanent Subcommittee on Historic Works commissioned photographers to document neighborhoods slated for demolition. Destroyed were churches, convents, schools, streets (rue Transnonain, made famous by Daumier, disappeared). Also razed were thousands of mixed-use buildings, inhabited by the working and middle classes. The working poor and lower middle classes could not afford the high rents of Haussmann's new buildings, and moved to shanty towns on the city's periphery—the first incidence of mass-scale social segregation. One contemporary lamented:

The Paris that I loved was the Paris that had not been Haussmannized.
I used to hunt out in midnight rambles such narrow streets, such gabled
roofs, such memories of a more romantic age as the city could still afford.
I still feel at times a revolt, and this is common with most Parisians, at the
mournful monotony of the architecture which he imposed.

(Jordan 1995: 348)

In the 1860s and 1870s, the art world was in flux as artists sought new audiences and forms of patronage; Paris was in flux as it underwent Haussmannization; the Western world itself was in flux as the appearance and routines of daily life became transitory under pressure from industrialization and urbanization. Compounding this situation was political instability. Napoleon III's regime teetered in the second half of the 1860s, and toppled by capitulation in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, which left Germany united and France in chaos. A Republican grassroots government, the Commune (which included Courbet and Dalou), took over in Paris in March 1871 to maintain essential services. Although functioning to the satisfaction of most Parisians, the Commune was overthrown two months later, after a violent battle with government forces that left thousands dead and much of Paris (including Napoleon III's Tuileries Palace, the law courts, the city hall, the Gobelins tapestry works, the Louvre library, and many government buildings) in ruins. The Third Republic, a democratically elected national government, lasted until 1940, but in the 1870s its longevity was far from assured, as various groups competed for control. Paris in the 1870s was an exhilarating, fast-paced, trendy city, characterized by novelty, transience, and insecurity.

NEW PARIS

Gustave Caillebotte (1848–94) produced an unforgettable vision of Haussmannized Paris in *Paris Street, Rainy Day* (1877, Figure 12.1). The newly paved, cavernous avenues, monotonous architecture, and drably elegant strollers (whose conformity is signaled by their all carrying the same umbrella model), convey an image of Paris that is tidy, predictable, and affluent. Caillebotte planned his composition with the care of an academician, evidenced by numerous site and figural studies. Caillebotte's well-



Figure 12.1
Gustave Caillebotte, *Paris Street, Rainy Day*, 1877.
Oil on canvas, 212 × 276 cm
(7 × 9 ft). The Art Institute of
Chicago.

ordered composition, working method, and detailed technique expressed pretense rather than naturalness, discipline rather than spontaneity—in other words, the essence of Haussmannization and bourgeois order. The rigid symmetry of paving stones, balconies, chimneys, the background building (with its construction scaffolding), and even the canvas—divided into almost equal quadrants by the heads of pedestrians and the gas lamppost—reinforces a sense of stability and control. While the scene corresponds roughly to one viewed through a wide-angle lens, this was impossible since such wide-angle lenses were not produced until the 1920s. Furthermore, this would not explain distortions in scale and distance: the actual site with figures placed as in the painting does not correspond directly to *Paris Street*. Caillebotte manipulated perspective—a Renaissance method for conveying a normative sense of order—to achieve an artificial order matching the aspirations of Haussmann and the bourgeoisie inhabiting the neighborhood near the Gare St Lazare where these streets—Moscou (Moscow), Bucarest, and St Petersburg—intersect.

Paris Street's monumental size—almost 7 × 9 feet (2 × 3 meters) announced Caillebotte's intention to produce a history painting-sized image of daily life in his own Paris neighborhood. This location was near Caillebotte's own apartment at 77 rue de Miromesnil, in the fashionable 8th arrondissement. Caillebotte's family was in the textile business and he inherited a fortune in 1874, giving him financial independence. He studied briefly with Léon Bonnat (1833–1922) and was accepted at the École des Beaux-Arts, although there is no record of his attendance. While Caillebotte's working methods were traditional (preliminary sketches and arranged compositions), he rejected academic subject matter, preferring, like Courbet, to represent familiar people and places. *Paris Street*'s life-size figures (with whom the viewer seems about to collide) combine with a funneling perspective to draw viewers into the image, suggesting that they, too, are genteel strollers.



To see this
Caillebotte family
residence go to
[www.routledge.com/
textbooks/facos](http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos)

FLÂNEURS AND BOULEVARDIERS

New words were invented to describe this new and unfamiliar world. Detached observers of the urban scene were “*flâneurs*,” and those who cruised its spacious boulevards to see, shop, and be seen were “*boulevardiers*.” These leisure occupations depended on affluence, anonymity, crowds, and abundant public spaces, a confluence of factors nonexistent earlier. The concept *flâneur* arose during the 1830s to describe what was considered a distinctly Parisian character, one familiar with all aspects of Paris and with an exceptional imagination, allowing him to penetrate the veil of fragmented appearances to discover their hidden significance. In other words, the city was a text whose cryptic language the *flâneur* was uniquely equipped to decipher. His conventional bourgeois attire disguised his special status and functioned as a kind of invisible shield allowing him to observe and analyze without attracting attention. Writers like Honoré Balzac, Charles Baudelaire, and Gustave Flaubert and artists like Edgar Degas, Édouard Manet, and Claude Monet considered themselves members of this elite. During the 1880s, this concept of special insight shifted from a rational and objective attribute in Impressionism to an irrational and subjective attribute in Symbolism.

Flâneurs and *boulevardiers* frequented Haussmann’s grand boulevards. Sidewalks now made leisurely strolling possible, since pedestrians no longer needed to dodge carriages and omnibuses on congested Paris streets. The most fashionable neighborhoods were the newest and most expensive, particularly the area around the Opéra and the train station Gare St Lazare—artery to the western suburbs and chic resorts on the Normandy coast. No longer mazes of narrow streets, refuse, stench, street entertainers, and workshops, these neighborhoods attracted the bourgeoisie and aristocracy. They lived in segregated luxury in large, light-filled apartments, steps away from posh restaurants, clubs, and shopping. This new Paris catered to those having surplus cash and leisure with an army of impoverished workers who did not. The first department stores—Au Bon Marché, Galeries Lafayette, Printemps—relied on this dense concentration of conspicuous consumers. Designers, jewelers, glove makers, milliners, and other luxury-trade artisans profited from this traffic by opening shops nearby.

The man in Caillebotte’s *Paris Street* might be a *flâneur*, but his female companion is not a *flâneuse* (the female version) because she wears a veil that impedes her vision. Veils first became fashionable in the 1850s and were marketed intensively by department stores. The alleged reason for veils was to protect women from the dust produced by Haussmannization, dust that supposedly carried cholera (a water-borne bacterium) and tuberculosis (air-borne). Veils’ porosity would not have been much protection from dust, but they did create a visual barrier for the bourgeois women who wore them in a world where seeing and thinking clearly were prerequisites for control.

In 1873 Claude Monet (1840–1926) painted a *flâneur’s* view in *Boulevard des Capucines* (Figure 12.2) from the vantage point of Nadar’s recently vacated photographic studio, located at number 35, where the Impressionists’ first exhibition opened in April 1874. Exclusive establishments lined Boulevard des Capucines, including the Grand Hotel (opened in 1862), the Jockey Club, whose membership consisted primarily of industrialists and financiers, and The Union, whose membership was restricted to aristocrats and foreign diplomats. Modeled on English private men’s clubs, the Jockey and Union clubs manifested the Anglomania gripping Paris during the Second Empire. Many aspects of English life impressed Napoleon III during his years in



Figure 12.2

Claude Monet, *Boulevard des Capucines*, 1873–74. Oil on canvas, 80 × 60 cm (31½ × 23¾ in). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.

London: Hyde Park (emulated in the redesigned Bois de Boulogne), horse racing, and picnicking. Although Boulevard des Capucines predated Haussmannization, it was widened to accommodate broad sidewalks, separated from vehicular traffic by a row of trees. Widening necessitated demolition, and the seven-story buildings visible on the left typify Haussmannian construction. Apartments usually included wrought-iron balconies for discreetly viewing street life, as demonstrated by the top-hatted gentlemen along the right edge. Rather than representing objects with an expected degree of detail, Monet relied on the viewer's experience of the world to correctly interpret the visual clues in his painting. The black rectangles sandwiched between buildings and trees must be carriages, and the “tongue-lickings,” as one critic described them, must then be pedestrians, whose gender can in some cases be deduced by the silhouette of brushstrokes.



For pictures of Haussmannian buildings go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

EXPERIMENTATION

What led Monet to this sketchy way of painting? Artists had always painted sketchily, but usually such efforts were considered preliminary studies to a subsequent, precisely detailed work. By asserting that *Boulevard des Capucines* was “finished,” Monet transgressed popular expectations and academic standards. At the same time, Monet developed a visual language that he felt effectively expressed the dynamism of Paris. What better way to accomplish this than with a technique that seemed rapid and

spontaneous? Monet was inspired by the example of Turner, whose work he studied at the National Gallery in London while evading military service during the Franco-Prussian War. Turner's work influenced Monet's evolution of a visual language appropriate to conveying how one experiences a place. This sensitivity to experience of place led Monet, Manet, and the Impressionists to think more deeply about the mechanics of vision. They became more acutely aware of the ways in which texture, luminosity, temperature, and humidity affected appearances and considered new ways of conveying them.

In the 1820s artists began purchasing paints from color merchants specializing in creating colors and grinding pigments (colored powders) that were then mixed with oil. During the course of the nineteenth century new pigments, including synthetic compounds, became available through advances in chemistry. Although spurred by industrial demand, artists experimented with them and other kinds of oil binders. For instance, white pigments made from either zinc or lead were available, but lead was considered more stable and was therefore more widely used. Impressionists also experimented with how finely pigments were ground, because this gave them additional options for creating visual effects. By the 1860s, Paris was the city in Europe distinguished by its numerous color merchants specializing in custom pigments for artists. For this reason, artists interested in technical innovation enjoyed a distinct advantage in Paris due to the vast array of products and expertise available. This selection, in turn, encouraged experimentation and the sharing of discoveries.

The Finnish painter Helene Schjerfbeck, for instance, painted several unconventional works outdoors while living in France, including *Drying Laundry* (1883, Figure 12.3). Painted at Pont Aven, Brittany (Chapter 14), *Drying Laundry* was an extraordinarily bold work for a young foreign artist working in France and for a woman painter, since both groups usually wanted to conform to established norms and establish reputations by emulating the example of successful male colleagues. Here Schjerfbeck created a work that did not fit any of the five academic categories (history, portraiture, genre, landscape, still life), nor the Impressionist directive to

Figure 12.3

Helene Schjerfbeck, *Drying Laundry*, 1883. Oil on canvas, 39 × 55 cm (15½ × 21½ in). Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki.



record modern life. It is an outdoor scene, but not a landscape; it represents a modest, everyday scene, but without people it is not genre; the haphazard spread of laundry distinguishes it from the careful arrangement of still lifes. Although there are no signs of the enclosed domestic spaces associated with the female sphere, the subject, laundry, refers to routine women's work. The loose brushwork, banal subject, and attentiveness to capturing the nuances of light, atmosphere, and wind suggest that Schjerfbeck was looking at Impressionist painting, and may have been inspired by Edgar Degas's glimpses into neglected corners. Schjerfbeck's singular subject indicates her enthusiasm for the non-conformist message of Impressionism.

Like Mariya Bashkirtseva, Helene Schjerfbeck was sickly—a fall down stairs when she was four left her deformed and in frequent pain. As an invalid, Schjerfbeck spent her time drawing, and she entered the Finnish Art Association's Drawing School at the early age of 11. Circumstances for women artists in Scandinavia were much better than on the continent: they studied alongside male colleagues and competed for scholarships. When Schjerfbeck won a scholarship in 1880, she joined the Scandinavian artists' enclave in Paris, studied at the Académie Colarossi and began exhibiting at the Salon in 1883. She returned to Helsinki in 1893 and taught at the Drawing School. As an unmarried daughter, care and support of her demanding elderly mother usurped increasing time and energy, and in 1902 they moved to a small town, living in relative isolation.

OLD PARIS

Edgar Degas (1834–1917), inspired by his younger colleagues to focus on images of contemporary life, painted a scene from *his* corner of Paris—Place de la Concorde. Like Manet, Degas considered himself a Realist—a keen observer and recorder of the modern world. His aristocratic status and financial independence gave him artistic freedom enabling him to work in a wide variety of media and explore a wide variety of subjects—from historical themes to brothels. In 1853 Degas satisfied parental expectations by entering law school, but spent most of his time copying masterpieces at the Louvre. After a year, he abandoned law, studied painting with Ingres's student Louis Lamothe (1822–69), and attended the École des Beaux-Arts in 1855–56. Degas spent the remainder of the decade living with his aunt's family in Florence, where Gustave Moreau visited him in 1859. He met Manet at the Louvre in 1862 while copying a painting by Velasquez. Manet introduced him to the Impressionists, who inspired Degas to shift his attention from history painting to images of contemporary life; Degas contributed art works and financial support to Impressionist exhibitions. Degas's working method was closer to Caillebotte's than to Monet's, carefully planning his compositions and executing them indoors based on sketches.

Degas's *Viscount Lepic and his Daughters Crossing the Place de la Concorde* (Figure 12.4) is an unusual portrait, depicting its subjects outdoors and apparently unaware of the artist/viewer. Portraits were usually set indoors with sitters surrounded by objects identifying them; here, the only clue is the dog—Lepic was a breeder. Degas pioneered this new kind of portrait, situating the sitter in her/his public milieu. He wanted to “do portraits of people in familiar, typical attitudes, and above all give their faces and bodies the same expressions” (McMullen 1984: 158). Here, Degas stranded his client in the yawning space of Place de la Concorde, with only subtle clues (the buildings in combination with the sculpture-bedecked wall) as to its location. Unlike Batoni (Figure 1.11), Degas did not depict a singular, staged moment, surrounding his clients

Figure 12.4

Edgar Degas, *Viscount Lepic and His Daughters Crossing the Place de la Concorde*, 1875. Oil on canvas, 78.4 × 117.5 cm (31 × 46¼ in). The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.



with objects intended to impress the viewer with the sitter's good taste, but depicted them in the midst of habitual activity. Unlike Caillebotte's pedestrians, the Lepics do not walk on Haussmannian sidewalks nor stroll toward a collective goal; they seem aimless, adrift in the square where Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette were beheaded, an event marking the end of aristocratic control. Still, Degas acknowledged that his composition was carefully planned: "no art was ever less spontaneous than mine. What I do is the result of reflection and study of the great masters; of inspiration, spontaneity, temperament ... I know nothing" (Thomson 1987: 9).

While also motherless, the Lepics are a far cry from Amerling's loving Arthäber family (Figure 7.5); they are less a family unit than family fragments, despite the strong family resemblance in terms of physiognomy, comportment, and dress. Degas reinforced a sense of arbitrariness by cropping the lower halves of the Lepics and part of the cane-bearing man entering the picture on the left. Unlike Manet, but similar to Caillebotte, the objects of our gaze seem unaware of our presence—like the stylish Lepics, the viewer must also be an elegant *boulevardier* observing the urban scene with the aloofness of a *flâneur*. The vacant expressions of father and daughters and their lack of interaction (even their dog's attention focuses elsewhere) suggest boredom and perhaps even degeneration. In his study *Degeneration*, Max Nordau described the condition as a "severe mental epidemic" symptomatic of "an exhausted central nervous system" caused by "the vertigo and whirl of our frenzied life" (Nordau 1894: 537, 536, 42). The danger was that degeneration as well as syphilis (rampant among the aristocracy and bourgeoisie) was believed to cause hereditary, genetic modifications that threatened society, the nation, and survival of the human species.

BOURGEOIS LEISURE

In the 1860s, Manet's attraction to urban themes was shared primarily by now forgotten artists like Constantin Guys (1802–92), who catered to the popular taste for straightforward, fashionable images of city life. Not until the 1870s did the Impressionist generation—Caillebotte, Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Eva Gonzalès,

Monet, Berthe Morisot, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir—join Manet in recording the dynamism of modern urban life and, in the process, “Haussmannized” art. “Haussmannization” seems an appropriate description because these artists broke with past styles, introduced light and air, imposed uniformity (in their swarms of anonymous, often featureless figures, and carefully ordered compositions), and reveled in the novelty and dynamism of modern Paris.

Adjacent to the Tuileries Palace, where Napoleon III lived, was a park he opened to the public as a (false) sign of his democratic sympathies. In the 1860s concerts were often held there on Sundays in summer, and bourgeois Parisians belonging to Manet’s social circle attended. In good weather, Manet spent most afternoons in the Tuileries with Baudelaire and recorded such an afternoon in *Music in the Tuileries* (1862, Figure 12.5). The attire of the men (black topcoats, tall silk hats, walking sticks), children (billowing white dresses with sashes), and women (bonnets, veils, gloves, fans, and parasols), confirms the bourgeois identity of this crowd. Manet captured the genteel sociability, the desire to see and be seen and to enjoy the cultural offerings of a world capital, in a decentralized, kaleidoscopic, and seemingly random orchestration of color and activity that communicates the transience and congeniality of Parisian bourgeois public life. The painting lacks a strong compositional structure; instead, the viewer’s eye flits across the canvas settling first on one figure or group then another, with a loose anchor provided by the playing children in the foreground from whom adult activity extends in a kind of V. Not only does the syncopated rhythm of colors and forms convey the transience and serendipity of urban experience, it also functions as a visual equivalent for the music that is playing, but whose performers are hidden.

Manet described his own world in *Music in the Tuileries*. Not just in the sense of location and social class, but in specific terms analogous to Courbet’s *Burial at Ornans* (Figure 10.2). Manet included portraits of friends and family: the composer Jacques Offenbach (seated and wearing glasses under the tree to the left of center), Baudelaire (standing behind the younger, blue-bonneted woman), Manet’s brother Eugène (standing to the left of Offenbach), and Manet himself, the dapper figure holding what looks like a paintbrush, just entering the scene from the left. Here, Manet portrayed himself as the embodiment of the modern artist-*flâneur* as described



Figure 12.5
Édouard Manet, *Music in the Tuileries*, 1862. Oil on canvas, 76 × 118 cm (30 × 46½ in). The National Gallery, London.

by Baudelaire in his 1863 essay “The Painter of Modern Life,” one who observes the world from within, but remains invisible. In contrast to the notion of modernity as synonymous with structure and organization (time itself was standardized in 1885 with Greenwich as the starting point), Manet suggests the opposite—modern experience consists of randomness and chance. He innovated technically to reinforce this effect. Technical examination of *Music in the Tuileries* using x-ray and microscope reveals that Manet adopted non-academic techniques: a variety of brushwork, painting over dried patches as well as wet ones, scraping with a palette knife, and abrupt tonal transitions, all of which contravene the painting’s visual coherence.

Impressionists attended all sorts of entertainment—from circuses to opera—and were as interested in off-stage events as well as performances. In 1874, the year Renoir painted *The Loge* (Courtauld Institute, London), Manet’s only pupil, Eva Gonzalès (1849–83), painted *Loge at the Théâtre des Italiens* (Figure 12.6), rejected by that year’s Salon jury (but accepted in 1879). Gonzalès, whose career was cut short when she died in childbirth, came from a prominent bourgeois intellectual family (father a writer, mother a musician) living in Paris. Like Manet, she exhibited regularly at the Salon and refused to participate in the Impressionist exhibitions. Here, Gonzalès represents a loge at Paris’s comic opera straight on, as if the artist (and viewer) dangles in thin air. A better explanation, however, is that this is a view seen through opera glasses, such as those held by Gonzalès’s woman in blue. While her escort (husband?) ignores her, someone else (the viewer) is clearly admiring her from a distance. The velvet choker, pink flower in the hair, and bouquet invite comparison with Manet’s *Olympia* (Figure 11.10), although Gonzalès’s woman appears in public and is properly and elegantly attired, with her blue satin gown and gloved hand. Placed in the center of the canvas and prominently lit, the woman is the focus of the painting, flanked by a bouquet and her male companion. She is the quintessential bourgeois woman: physically (and legally) under male control, fulfilling expectations of passivity and beauty, and able to escape only in her mind, now seemingly absorbed in the performance below. Like a

Figure 12.6

Eva Gonzalès, *Loge at the Théâtre des Italiens*, 1874. Oil on canvas, 98 × 130 cm (3 ft 2½ in × 4 ft 3 in). Musée d’Orsay, Paris.



puppet-master, the man stands discretely in the shadows, his angular physique, somber attire, and distance (physical and psychological) emphasizing the separation of spheres that is sometimes blurred in images of public sociability such as Manet's *Tuilleries*.

CAFÉ SOCIETY

Cafés played an increasingly central role in the life of artists. In Berlin, London, Paris, and Rome certain artists frequented certain cafés, which then became meeting places for like-minded colleagues. Courbet and Nadar were regulars at the café Nouvelles-Athènes on Place Pigalle during the 1850s. In the late 1860s, Manet sat at the Café Guerbois almost daily, often accompanied by Degas. After the Franco-Prussian War, Manet relocated to the Nouvelles-Athènes, where he sat on Thursdays along with artists and writers, including Degas (both had been artillery volunteers in 1870–71), Puvis, Renoir, author Émile Zola, and (when they were in town) Monet and Pissarro.

In 1876, Degas portrayed his friends the painter-engraver-author Marcellin Desboutin and the actress Ellen Andrée, at the Nouvelles-Athènes (Figure 12.7). Desboutin was eccentric—a poverty-stricken aristocrat who gambled away his castle in Italy and had a play produced at the Théâtre Français. Andrée was a star at the Folies Bergère, a popular cabaret. The intense light of early morning filters through the curtains and is reflected in the gold-framed mirror; Andrée slumps bleary-eyed before a glass of absinthe, while Desboutin gazes beyond the painting's parameters, a

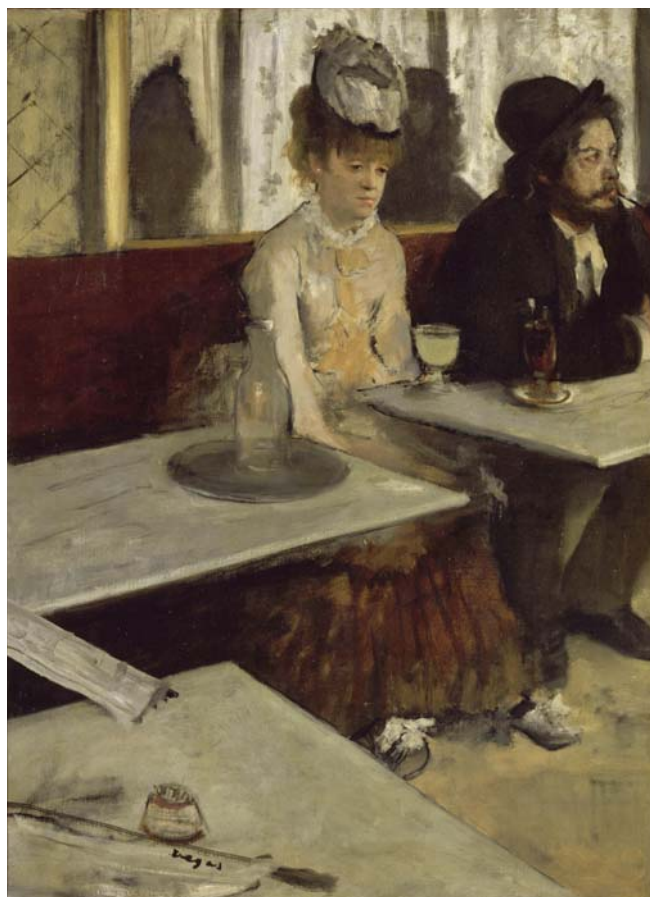


Figure 12.7

Edgar Degas, *L'Absinthe*, 1876.
Oil on canvas, 92 × 68 cm
(36 × 26¾ in). Musée d'Orsay,
Paris.

hangover remedy consisting of coffee and mineral water on the table beside him. This subject constituted a kind of “in joke” among Degas’s friends, since they all knew that the disciplined Andrée was far less likely than degenerate Desboutin to indulge in absinthe. Absinthe was a popular, anise-flavored narcotic beverage, distilled from the wormwood plant, that proved more efficient than alcohol in transporting imbibers to a state of euphoria.

Degas painted this scene from the point of view of a customer sitting at a nearby table, the zig-zag pattern of table tops and rolled newspapers suggests casual observation. The banality of this scene is disrupted by implausibly floating table tops, a purposeful undercutting of viewer expectations also typical of Manet. However carefully Degas described his world, he always reminded viewers that his images were creative constructions, not slices of life. Degas reinforced this by emphasizing texture and execution, as in most Impressionist paintings. Such ordinary views and odd effects, usually overlooked by artists, fascinated Degas. In an 1868 notebook entry he made a note: “Work a great deal on night effects—lamps, candles, and so on. The provocative thing is not always to show the source of the light but rather its effect” (McMullen 1984: 158).

The absence of known preparatory drawings for *Absinthe* suggests the spontaneity of this painting. Although Degas captured a plausible scene, he reminded viewers that paintings were purposeful objects reflecting an artist’s personal choices. As in the Lepic portrait, Degas’s subjects function simultaneously as portraits and as urban types. This young, professional pair appears to be all-night partiers rather than early morning risers. Physically together, but psychologically estranged, they epitomize the alienation and isolation of the individual in urban environments. *Absinthe* was exhibited in Brighton, England in 1876 and at the Third Impressionist Exhibition a year later.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), a working-class boy apprenticed to a porcelain painter, began his art studies by copying at the Louvre in 1860 and met Monet when both studied with Glèyre in 1861. Although Renoir studied at the École (1862–64) and debuted at the 1864 Salon, he was good friends with Monet and accompanied him on painting expeditions to the Fontainebleau forest and weekend resorts along the Seine, such as La Grenouillère. On Sunday afternoons, Renoir and his girlfriend Lise Tréhot frequented Moulin de la Galette, an open-air dance hall in Montmartre, an older neighborhood spared from Haussmannization. Montmartre was a rough, working-class neighborhood, and Moulin de la Galette (a mill grinding iris roots for perfume manufacture) was neither fashionable nor famous; Manet would never have gone there. But this was Renoir’s world, and he memorialized it in *Dance at the Moulin de la Galette* (Figure 12.8), exhibited at the Third Impressionist Exhibition, which was organized by Caillebotte (who purchased *Moulin*) and held in a rented apartment across from the Durand-Ruel Gallery in 1877.

In its representation of sociability Renoir’s *Moulin de la Galette* is a kind of working-class counterpart to Manet’s *Music*. Because Renoir’s friend and biographer Georges Rivière described the painting’s evolution, we know that *Moulin de la Galette* was painted entirely outdoors. Art critic Gustave Geffroy observed: “*Moulin de la Galette* is one of the most complete summaries of lively observation and light-filled ambiance: the intoxication of dance, of noise, of sun, of the dust of an outdoor party” (Renoir 1985: 148). Concerned with authenticity, Renoir only included portraits of people who actually frequented Moulin de la Galette on Sunday afternoons—working



Figure 12.8

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Dance at the Moulin de la Galette*, 1876. Oil on canvas, 131 × 175 cm (51 × 69 in). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

women (laundresses, milliners, seamstresses), men from the neighborhood, and Renoir's friends, who appreciated the Moulin's opportunities for socializing without commitment. According to Rivière, *Moulin de la Galette* offered carefree enjoyment of one's day off, not mate-hunting or prostitution.

Both Manet in *Music* and Renoir in *Moulin de la Galette* suggested the idea of music. Manet alluded to music through the syncopated rhythms of his composition and Renoir through the couples dancing to the band in the background. Despite these similarities, each portrayed a different social class and represented their subjects in differing and personal visual languages. In contrast to Manet's *Music*, the lack of veils, parasols, walking sticks, and top hats in Renoir's *Moulin de la Galette* identifies the crowd as working class, and the presence of ladder-back instead of gilded chairs indicates a less-affluent setting. While Renoir applied an even degree of finish (or sketchiness) to all parts of his painting, thus avoiding criticism about uneven treatment, he recorded odd effects of filtered sunlight—colored spheres on the shoulder and arm of the man in the foreground and bluish shadows on the ground—which Manet did not. Renoir strove to reproduce optical effects accurately, an ambition of little interest to Manet, just as Manet's visual games and conceptual jokes did not interest Renoir. Renoir drew attention to gas lighting, a hallmark of modern urban life that had enabled Parisians to enjoy outdoor nightlife for more than a decade. Renoir returned to exhibiting at the Salon in 1878 for financial reasons, and did not participate in the fourth and fifth Impressionist exhibitions.

SUBURBAN INDUSTRY

Pissarro, a landscapist, was open to new ways of updating landscape painting. Born on the Danish island of St Thomas, he was self-taught until moving to Paris in 1855 and entering the École in 1856. Pissarro began studies at the Académie Suisse (where he met Monet and Paul Cézanne) in 1859, the year he began exhibiting at the Salon.

Pissarro embraced the experimental attitude of the (younger) Impressionists and was the only artist to participate in all eight Impressionist exhibitions. Instead of producing academically acceptable formulaic landscapes, Pissarro preferred capturing nature at a particular, modern moment, such as *Factory near Pontoise* (1873, Figure 12.9). Here, on the banks of the Oise River and beyond the towpath for barges, stands the starch factory in Saint-Ouen, an industrial suburb north of Paris. Were it not for smoke-belching chimneys, one might interpret this cluster of buildings as a pre-industrial village. Pissarro did not portray industry as demonic and Sublime (like de Loutherbourg, Figure 5.1), but as a matter-of-fact presence in the countryside, consistent with Naturalist practice: the smoke stacks echo the poplar trees on the right, no more apparently threatening or harmful. Still, *Factory* is a modern picture attesting to industry's transformation of the French landscape. Although Pissarro's ideas about truth in painting prevented his arranging objects according to a predetermined composition, he carefully selected his viewpoint: the tallest rooftop appears at the exact center of the painting, establishing the axis of a stable horizontal-vertical grid, a strategy adopted by Monet. At the same time, *Factory* captures a transitory moment, when the dark chimney smoke blends with billowing cumulus clouds. Pissarro suggested a rapid water current with short brushstrokes, a blue band of nature in motion enlivening an otherwise prosaic scene.

SUBURBAN LEISURE

At the eighth and last Impressionist exhibition in 1886, Georges Seurat (1859–91) displayed his monumental vision of Parisian pleasure-seekers, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte* (1884, Figure 12.10). Seurat studied at the École in 1878–79 with Henri Lehmann (1814–82), an Ingres pupil, but quit after visiting the Fourth Impressionist Exhibition (1879). Instead, typical of the increasingly independent attitude of young artists, Seurat studied on his own by copying at the Louvre and at temporary exhibitions.

Figure 12.9

Camille Pissarro, *Factory Near Pontoise*, 1873. Oil on canvas, 45 × 55 cm (17¾ × 21½ in). © The James Philip Gray Collection, Michele and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts. Photography by David Stansbury.



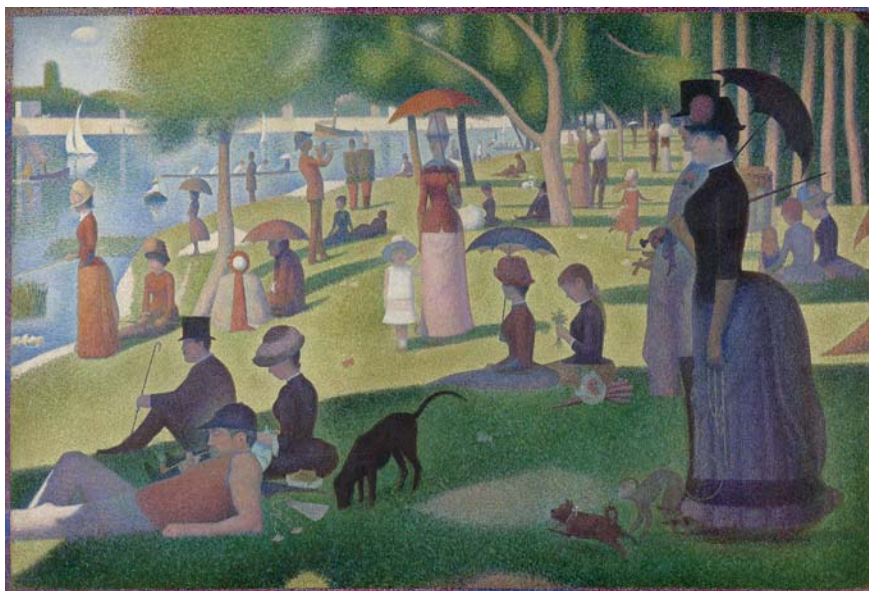


Figure 12.10
Georges Seurat, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, 1884, 1884–86.
Oil on canvas, 203 × 307 cm
(6 ft 8 in × 10 ft 1 in). The Art
Institute of Chicago.

Among the works Seurat copied was Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's *Poor Fisherman* (Figure 13.1) at the 1881 Salon. Seurat exhibited in a variety of venues: the Salon (beginning in 1883), the Salon des Indépendants (1884), and Les XX (1887, Chapter 14). He also worked his way through several different techniques before originating his signature Neoimpressionism.

Created in dialogue with Manet's *Music in the Tuileries* and *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (both exhibited in 1884 at Manet's posthumous retrospective exhibition, held around the time that Seurat was conceiving *Grande Jatte*) and Renoir's *Moulin de la Galette*, Seurat had different goals from his older colleagues. The site—a park located on an island in the Seine River—was a popular suburban weekend getaway for Parisians. In contrast to locales with personal significance favored by Manet and Renoir, *Grande Jatte* was not a place Seurat frequented and he did not depict specific people, much less friends and family. He created a scene consisting of anonymous individuals that simultaneously functioned as social types and as exemplars of the ambiguity characterizing modern urban life.

Like Manet and Renoir, Seurat focused on leisure and fashion, usually class identifiers, but here they are ambiguous. The figures are generic and the place anonymous and public—definitely not a bourgeois haunt, but not specifically a working-class spot either. Viewers cannot be sure whether the fashions identify the figures or if they enable the figures to masquerade among strangers with false identities. If Seurat represented a wide range of social classes (from the elegantly dressed strolling couple on the right to the relaxing workman in his sleeveless shirt on the left) *Grande Jatte* might symbolize a utopian vision of class harmony. Or, the stiff figures and lack of family groups might indicate a dystopic site of alienation. Either way, Seurat seems to critique modern society. Another possibility is that Seurat represented various working-class types, with the more affluent and pretentious ones wearing stylish, mass-produced knock-offs of designer clothes from department stores such as Printemps. For the working classes, Sunday was usually the only day off, and in the summer, they frequented parks and emulated bourgeois leisure activities.

Different identifications generate different interpretations. For instance the woman on the right, strolling with a male companion, wears an enormous bustle, a style especially popular in 1884—the year Seurat began the painting—so the viewer understands she is a dedicated follower of fashion. The pet monkey on a leash might identify her as a prostitute, since monkeys were popular exotic pets among prostitutes. But the feisty little dog on a leash was a typical pet of upper-class women and a residue from the eighteenth century, when female members of the royal entourage kept lap dogs to stave off boredom. These pets suggest conflicting identities. Seurat may have been suggesting the difficulty in pinpointing class or social position on the streets of modern Paris, where a rapidly growing population of strangers facilitated masquerade.

Social masquerade was a modern development; in earlier times, sumptuary laws prescribed who could wear what, with certain materials and styles reserved for particular professions and social positions. Under those conditions, identities could clearly be determined by clothing, but nineteenth-century social and economic changes enabled individuals to blur these distinctions. *Grande Jatte's* conflicting signals in this regard were certainly intentional. Seurat underscored uncertainty, ambiguity, and instability as hallmarks of modern Paris.

Seurat concurred with the basic premise of Impressionism—to represent one's own time and place—but he objected to the spontaneity and loose brushwork associated with Impressionism because he found it too personal. A detached, scientific approach was, he felt, more likely to produce accurate results. Although Seurat reverted to the academic practice of carefully planning his painting through numerous compositional and figure studies, he agreed with the Impressionist principle of adopting a truthful technique in which clearly articulated brushwork permitted the viewer to understand immediately that the painting was an artificial creation consisting of a series of decisions on the part of the artist regarding the placement, shape, and texture of pigments and brushstrokes. However, Seurat felt that this approach needed to be grounded in scientific principals rather than individual perception. Unlike the Impressionists, Seurat believed that scientific objectivity in analysis and execution was important because it expressed a more balanced and non-judgmental attitude appropriate to modern life and a non-hierarchical social ideology. Seurat, a political anarchist who advocated individual liberty free from government interference, believed in the power of art to change society. By modeling an ideal order in his paintings, he hoped to induce an ideal order in society.

Seurat structured the scene with a geometric grid, an idea influenced by Charles Blanc's widely read *Grammar of the Arts of Design* (1867), which emphasized the importance of structure. The controlled contours of each spot of color (not always dots) suggest discipline and planning, qualities Seurat felt were essential to social improvement. The overlapping of pigment spots between objects and figures effected on canvas a dissolution of the boundary between people and nature, consistent with the yearning of many of Seurat's contemporaries for a more holistic lifestyle. In addition, the breaking down of objects into an assembly of small, discrete particles evoked the new field of cell biology and the awareness that all objects consist of miniscule, round components.

Seurat recognized science's potential to enhance human life and condemned its use to construct oppressive systems of routinized labor. He studied color theory (including Eugène Chevreul's 1839 *On the Laws of the Simultaneous Contrast of Colors* and Ogden Rood's *Modern Chromatics*, 1879). Based on this, Seurat evolved a method

whereby he reduced objects to spots of pigment representing the natural pigment of the object as well as the chromatic effects of light and atmosphere. He intended these separate elements to mix in the viewer's eye and to be transformed by the brain into a more vibrant, accurate visual experience. Seurat's critic-friend Félix Fénéon asserted the superiority of Seurat's Neoimpressionism to Monet's Impressionism in his pamphlet *The Impressionists in 1886*, based on its grounding in science rather than perception and its connection to tradition rather than serendipity. Seurat called his approach Chromo-luminarism, but it is usually referred to as Divisionism or Pointillism. The fact that Neoimpressionism did not function as Seurat envisioned matters less than the demonstration of how artists developed techniques to suit their purposes.

NATURAL AND ACQUIRED IDENTITIES

Seurat explored the ambiguity of public self-presentation in *Grande Jatte*, but Degas penetrated its artifice in *Fourteen-year-old Dancer* (1881, Figure 12.11).

Dancer was Realist in subject, appearance, and technique. Marie van Goethem, a student at the opera ballet school, was Degas's model. While she deviated from conventional expectations regarding beautiful, graceful ballerinas, her appearance did echo the bourgeois-aristocratic fiction that wealth produced beauty, and poverty, ugliness. Ugliness, as pseudosciences like phrenology and physiognomy



Figure 12.11
Edgar Degas, *Fourteen-Year Old Dancer*, 1881. Lost-wax cast bronze. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

affirmed, signaled stupidity and depravity, the dominant characteristics of the lower classes. Thus while Degas flouted convention by representing an unattractive dancer, he reinforced social stereotypes.

Fourteen-year-old Dancer transgressed established norms for sculpture. Although bronze casts were produced after Degas's death, the original sculpture was made from colored wax on a wooden base. She wore an authentic tulle tutu and a real hair wig tied with a satin ribbon. Any one of these elements was enough to provoke controversy: wax was not a traditional academic sculptural material, and nowhere in the history of post-Renaissance sculpture were sculptures dressed in real clothing. In his review of the exhibition, Joris-Karl Huysmans praised Degas's pioneering work: "The terrible realism of this statuette creates a distinct unease; all ideas about sculpture, about cold, lifeless whiteness ... are demolished ... at once refined and barbaric ... [it is] the only truly modern attempt that I know of in sculpture" (Huysmans 1883: 226–7). But Huysmans was in the minority. More typical was Henri Trianon's review in *Le Constitutionnel*: "If he wants to show us a statuette of a dancer, he chooses her from among the most odiously ugly; he makes it the standard of horror and bestiality" (Berson 1996: 368).

By making his *Dancer* homely and awkward Degas focused attention on the body's physiognomy and musculature, prompting awareness of the effort required to train bodies to perform gracefully. Although decisively placed, her feet are not in any specific dance position—they are somewhere near fourth, but not exactly. Her posture is inelegant and uncomfortable, a compositional equivalent for the hard work required to transform awkwardness to grace via diligence and training. Degas's use of wax evoked associations with the weirdly realistic, life-size figures of Madame Tussaud, who began her career during the French Revolution making wax heads, then whole figures, of those guillotined. Degas, for the first time in modern sculpture, turned to a popular art form to invigorate and challenge tradition. *Fourteen-year-old Dancer's* real clothing and wig allude on the one hand, to dressing dolls; on the other, they reference venerable ancient traditions like the Panathenaic festival, held every four years in ancient Greece. The culmination of the festival was the changing of the robes worn by Phideas's monumental statue of Athena in the Parthenon. Thus, while dolls would have been the most immediate association for Degas's contemporaries, one can also interpret Degas's innovation as reviving a lapsed classical tradition. Like other modernist pioneers, Degas lifted a genre subject that highlighted ugliness rather than beauty, and that was created in lowbrow materials, to the level of high art by the scale in which he worked (life size) and the public venue in which it was exhibited (the sixth Impressionist Exhibition, 1881).

GARE SAINT LAZARE

The Gare (train station) Saint Lazare, built in 1837, was Paris's first railway station. Although mainly used by suburban commuters, by 1860 it linked Paris to Argenteuil (Monet's home in the 1870s), Bougival (popular weekend spot), Le Havre (Monet's hometown), Pontoise (Pissarro's home in 1866–68 and 1872–82), and Rouen (where Monet painted in the 1880s). To accommodate increased traffic, the building was renovated and enlarged in the early 1840s, and again in the early 1850s, when five glass and iron-span halls were added, a subject Monet depicted in a series of paintings from 1877.

Manet and Caillebotte lived near Gare Saint Lazare and painted views of it; Manet could even feel the vibration of trains from his studio on rue de Saint-Petersbourg. The station appears in the background of *The Railway* (1873, Figure 12.12), a scene set in the garden of Manet's friend Alphonse Hirsch, whose daughter Suzanne modeled for the child. At the 1874 Salon, one critic described this as a portrait, but it would have been a rather unusual one, portraying only the back of the young sitter. The woman beside Suzanne is Victorine Meurent, familiar from her appearances in *Déjeuner* and *Olympia*. Under Impressionist influence, Manet abandoned here his penchant for quoting famous earlier paintings, but did refer to his own works by including the recognizable Victorine, wearing her black velvet choker; Olympia's saucy cat has been transformed into a sleepy puppy.

Manet undercut viewer expectations in several ways. First, the title is inconsistent with a large figure painting. The railway appears only indirectly through the cloud of vapor, the sketchily rendered tracks, and the hint of the railway bridge (Pont de l'Europe) on the right. In addition, Manet reversed expected rules of comportment—the child wears her hair up like an adult, whereas Victorine's is loose—acceptable for a girl but not a woman—and the child has small, tasteful earrings that contrast with Victorine's hoops. Their dress suggests a discrepancy in social class, corresponding to, but not definitively designating, a nanny-child relationship. Furthermore, it is unclear what kind of reading material Victorine holds on her lap—perhaps a train schedule or magazine—but its placement combined with the insertion of her fingers between its pages create an unsettling, but certainly intentional, sexual reference (inappropriate for either a nanny or female relative, much less a mother). The acknowledging gaze of Victorine recalls *Olympia's*, reinforcing such an interpretation. Manet suggests the separation of spheres in the bustling (public/male) train yard beyond the prison-like bars of the domestic garden enclosing women, who watch and wait. Unlike the loge parapet in Gonzalès's *Théâtre des Italiens*, no barrier, physical or visual, separates the viewer from these women, thereby situating the viewer also in this private space.



Figure 12.12
Édouard Manet, *The Railway*,
1873. Oil on canvas,
113 × 133 cm (44½ × 52¼ in).
National Gallery of Art,
Washington, DC.

SEASIDE RESORTS

Berthe Morisot (1841–95) reinterpreted Manet's composition from a feminine perspective in *In a Villa at the Seaside* (Figure 12.13), painted in 1874, the year she inherited a fortune and married Manet's brother. Morisot studied art as a mandatory part of her bourgeois upbringing, but she and her sister Edma were so talented that their parents allowed them to pursue painting more seriously. In 1858 they began studying with Joseph-Benoît Guichard (1806–80), a pupil of Delacroix and Ingres, and the sisters made their Salon debut in 1864. Camille Corot encouraged Morisot to paint outdoors, and she befriended Manet while working at the Louvre; her tolerant husband allowed Morisot to pursue her career. (Edma was not so fortunate. Her husband required her to give up painting for the sequestered, tedious life of a bourgeois wife.) Morisot, long a practitioner of outdoor painting, became an enthusiastic member of the Impressionists, participating in six of eight exhibitions.

Morisot painted *Villa at the Seaside* as a souvenir of a stay at Fécamp, near Le Havre, inspired partly by *The Railway*, which she had recently seen at the Salon. Like the young Delacroix when he reinterpreted Géricault's *Medusa* in *Barque of Dante*, Morisot presented an image more conventional than Manet's, but not, as in the case of Géricault, in order to please the Salon jury. By 1874, Morisot had stopped exhibiting at the Salon, was allied with the Impressionists, and her financial independence allowed her freedom of choice. Her gender and class, however, limited the boundaries of propriety and she, in true Impressionist fashion, painted her own world. Here, Edma sits with her two-year-old daughter, Blanche, on the veranda of a seaside villa. A model of bourgeois decorum, Edma wears a fashionable black ruffled frock and matching hat with gauze veil. She observes a woman with a parasol climbing the stairs, while Blanche gazes over the balustrade. Sailboats and bathing huts attest to the pleasures of seaside leisure. Morisot's subject (contemporary life) and technique

Figure 12.13
Berthe Morisot, *In a Villa at the Seaside*, 1874. Oil on canvas, 50 × 61 cm (19¾ × 24 in). Norton Simon Art Foundation, Pasadena.



(loose brushwork) signaled her professional participation in the Impressionist mission to convey casualness, spontaneity, and transience.

Bourgeois urbanites eager to escape the city during the summer, when stench and danger of disease were at their worst, began in the 1840s to imitate the aristocracy. Since the early nineteenth century, aristocrats enjoyed the salubrious benefits of sea air and water on the advice of their doctors. Heath rituals became social rituals, and the middle classes, eager to demonstrate their social status, also began frequenting the seaside, as well as mountain resorts and spas, activities made possible by the expansion of railway networks. In northern France, the Normandy coast was especially popular, and artists and writers extolled its authenticity, charm, and healthfulness. The transition from sleepy fishing villages to tourist traps with hotels, restaurants, and casinos occurred during the economic boom of the Second Empire.

A native of Trouville, Eugène Boudin (1824–98) specialized in landscapes set along the coasts of Brittany and Normandy. Largely self-taught, Boudin moved to Paris in 1847 and exhibited regularly at the Salon beginning in 1859. Boudin's main source of income was small-scale seaside tourist souvenirs such as *Beach at Trouville* (1863, Figure 12.14). The concept “tourist” was modern: the word, imported from England, entered the French vocabulary in 1841. Like Constable, Boudin's notion of truth entailed painting what he knew best. *Beach at Trouville* depicts a typical day at the beach, with the leisure activities of visiting urbanites, Boudin's target market, literally in the foreground. A well-dressed woman sheltered by a parasol supervises a boy playing in the sand, and fashionable strollers walk a dog. In the background, fisherfolk go about their routines. Their diminutive size and distant placement is appropriate to their minor role and reinforce the degree to which natives have relinquished “ownership” of the landscape—literally and figuratively—to bourgeois tourists. In this souvenir, Boudin recorded the effects of light and atmosphere at the beach on a summer day, paying equal attention to setting and figures. Loose brushwork suggests a rapidly executed sketch, one that captured the kind of generalized memories tourists took back to the city.

Boudin met Monet at an 1858 exhibition in Le Havre, a port on the Normandy coast where Monet's father, Adolphe, was a wholesale grocer. Boudin opened Monet's teenage eyes to the pleasure and problems of landscape painting in the mid-1850s, and in 1862 Monet went to Paris to study with Charles Glèyre, in whose studio he



Figure 12.14
Eugène Boudin, *Beach at Trouville*, 1863. Oil on wood panel, 18 × 35 cm (7 × 13¾ in). The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

met Renoir. Although remaining there for two years, Monet was more influenced by Boudin and Johan Jongkind (1819–91), who worked outdoors. In 1867, after almost a decade of working closely with and imitating the 16-years-older Boudin, Monet evolved his own approach to seaside subjects. He painted *Garden at Sainte-Adresse* (1867, Figure 12.15) from a window of his aunt's seaside villa.

Unlike Boudin, Monet avoided a generalized touristic view, recording instead a family gathering—he painted *his* world, *his* friends, *his* family. This is where Impressionism parts company with Naturalism—in its assertion that the artist's personal world provided suitable subjects for major paintings. Ironically, the bourgeois order permeating *Garden at Sainte-Adresse* contrasted with Monet's life at the time—while he painted his family, his future wife Camille Doncieux sat penniless and pregnant in Paris awaiting the birth of their son, Jean. Adolphe Monet disapproved of his son's relationship with a working-class woman even more than of his irresponsible decision to become an artist and withheld financial support.

Here, the older generation—aunt Jeanne-Marie LeCadre and Adolphe—sit in wicker chairs (specialized outdoor furniture signaled affluence), while a younger couple, Monet's cousin Jeanne-Marguérite and a male friend, stands by the fence, with all parties maintaining proper bourgeois distance. Monet conveyed generational continuity through similar dress and comportment while also suggesting that the younger generation was more vital and active. The older generation literally sits watching its children. A similar generational shift occurs on the water as well: old-fashioned sailing ships mingle with new, faster steamships, the preferred means of sea transport by 1867. Monet also referred to the transformation of Sainte-Adresse from a fishing village (indicated by the brown-sailed fishing boat) to a tourist center (indicated by the white-sailed leisure craft in the left background). The bourgeois arena is civilized, planted, and fenced, transformed from an untamed and irregular coast to a controlled garden of earthly delights; even the predominantly red and yellow hues of the flowers repeat the colors of the Norman flag.

Figure 12.15

Claude Monet, *Garden at Sainte-Adresse*, 1867.
Oil on canvas, 97 × 130 cm
(3 ft 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ in × 4 ft 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ in). The
Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York.



The same kind of order LeCadre imposed on her seaside property, Monet imposed on the composition of *Garden at Sainte-Adresse*—LeCadre, the owner, and her flower roundel mark the horizontal center of the painting, while Jeanne-Margu rite and her companion mark the center of the distance between the two flagpoles. In addition, the fence at the right—marking the boundary of land from sea and sky and the private domestic realm from the public domain of nature—occurs at the exact vertical midpoint of the canvas. Within this carefully constructed framework Monet showed the fleeting effects of nature—breeze coming from the south, rolling waves, and patches of sunlight and shadow on clothing, parasols, and ground. Monet understood that expectations regarding subject matter and degree of finish depended on a painting’s size. While Monet’s autobiographical subject complied with liberalized attitudes toward subject matter during the Second Republic, his loose brushwork placed this painting in the category of a sketch, not a “finished” painting.

BEACHES, BATHING, AND HYGIENE

When Henry Mayhew interviewed a London coal carrier in the 1840s, the man admitted: “I haven’t washed my body for these 22 years, and don’t see why I should begin to have anything to do with these new-fangled notions at my time of life” (Mayhew 1861: 250). This mindset extended beyond the working classes—few besides prostitutes bathed regularly in the nineteenth century. Bathing was considered especially ill-advised for women, because of alleged deleterious effects such as infertility, miscarriage, and premature aging. As indoor plumbing became common in bourgeois homes and news spread about the hygienic advantages of cleanliness—medical mortality decreased dramatically when doctors began washing their hands before handling patients—indoor bathing escalated in popularity. Among the bourgeoisie bathing constituted a compulsory component of child care, and the American Mary Cassatt (1844–1926) provided viewers with an intimate look at this practice in *The Child’s Bath* (1893, Figure 12.16). Cassatt studied for four years at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia and was exhibiting at the National Academy of Design (New York) and the Paris Salon by the 1870s. Despite a semi-nomadic life as the child of wealthy, travel-loving parents, Cassatt settled in Paris in 1875; her parents joined her two years later. Degas invited her to exhibit with the Impressionists in 1879, and Cassatt participated in four of five remaining exhibitions. She maintained her independence by never marrying, but, like Morisot and other women artists, Cassatt represented her own world, that of the bourgeois woman. Here, a docile, well-fed girl sits patiently on her nanny’s lap while having her feet washed. The pair’s attention is focused on their activity, suggesting that the viewer is either an unseen voyeur or an intimate family member. Cassatt created pictorial harmony by utilizing rose and mauve tonalities in a manner similar to Puvis de Chavannes, whose bluish shades in *Poor Fisherman* (Figure 13.1) inspired younger artists to create “decorative” unity through the dominance of a single, muted color.

Although the lower classes remained suspicious of bathing in the mid-nineteenth century, the middle classes, imitating the aristocracy, developed a spa culture revolving around hygiene and sociability. Sea-bathing evolved as a health practice in eighteenth-century England, encouraged by prominent doctors like Sir John Floyer, whose 1702 publication *The Ancient Psychrololysis Revived: or, an Essay to Prove Cold Water Bathing Both Safe and Useful* provided scientific justification (Figure 12.17). In addition to health, Enlightenment ideas promoting connectedness to nature



Figure 12.16
 Mary Cassatt, *The Child's Bath*,
 1893. Oil on canvas, 100 × 66 cm
 (39½ in × 26 in). The Art
 Institute of Chicago.



Figure 12.17
 Anonymous. *Study at a Quiet
 French Watering Place* from
Punch, 1 September 1877.

enhanced bathing's popularity among England's upper classes, a trend subsequently imitated on the continent. Separation of spheres dominated here also, with indoor bathing in a warm, private environment considered appropriate for women, while men were judged hearty enough to withstand the invigorating challenge of outdoor bathing. By mid-century, when railways connected cities with the coast, tourists, motivated by a variety of factors—yearning for nature, social climbing, improving health—filled boarding houses and hotels of formerly sleepy fishing villages.

Because of its fertility, nature, since ancient times, was considered feminine (see Blechen's *Terni Batthers*, Figure 5.17). Similarly, in the nineteenth century leisure activities associated with resort culture were perceived initially as feminine because they contrasted with the competitive, strenuous, public sphere of men. This attitude changed in the second half of the century, as physical immersion in nature was recast as a testing ground of masculinity, where invigorating practices such as cold water bathing strengthened the mind and body of the men who practiced it. Bathing, therefore, was a theme transcending the Impressionist impulse to represent the artist's personal realm; it also expressed general ideas about the relationship between people and nature in the modern world.

Summer Scene (1869, Figure 12.18) by Frédéric Bazille (1841–70) is a hybrid work with aspects relating to academic practice, the artist's world, and the masculinization of nature then taking place. Bazille's promising career was cut short when he was killed during the Franco-Prussian War. His parents sent him to Paris to study medicine in 1862, but Bazille simultaneously enrolled in the studio of Charles Glèyre, where he met Monet and Renoir, and thereafter focused on painting. Bazille lived, traveled, and worked with Monet in 1865–66 and shared a studio with Renoir in 1869. Like the other Impressionists, Bazille routinely found his submissions rejected from the Salon,



Figure 12.18
Jean Frédéric Bazille, *Summer Scene*, 1869. Oil on canvas, 160 × 161 cm (5 ft 3 in × 5 ft 3¼ in). Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, MA.

although his final masterpiece, *Summer Scene*, appeared at the Salon of 1870, evidencing the liberalization of the Salon since its 1863 reform. *Summer Scene* conformed to the degree of finish expected of Salon paintings and its composition evokes the classical landscape formula with its flanking rows of trees leading the viewer gradually into the picture. Bathers mark the foreground, wrestlers and a fellow in the midst of dressing or undressing, the middle ground. The composition's symmetry, indicated by pairs of men on either side of a midpoint marked by the wrestlers and the fellow with outstretched arms, indicated an arrangement reflecting artistic intention rather than serendipity. These partially nude men also allude to study of the nude male body, an integral part of academic study. Paintings of bathers in outdoor settings had a long history, but were traditionally female, reinforcing the gendering of nature as female (culture was male) and providing the soft-core pornography male collectors desired.

At the same time, a large-scale painting of male bathers was unprecedented in France, and *Summer Scene* was innovative in other ways as well. The square shape of the canvas was unusual—landscapes were typically horizontal, and figure paintings vertical—suggesting *Summer Scene* as a new, hybrid subject type. The poses struck by the men on the left evoke typical postures of female display, not the heroic virility associated with ancient sculpture. The painting's title suggests a casual, modern event which, like Seurat's *Grande Jatte*, is contradicted by the physical and psychological isolation of the figural episodes. Bazille's scene unfolds on the banks of the Lez River near Montpellier, where his father was a city official. The depiction of men bathing outdoors and wearing bathing suits acknowledged legal realities in the region; an 1835 law forbade nude bathing and required women to bathe in a single-sex, indoor facility. At the same time the effeminate poses of the single figures on the left and the depilated bodies suggest a harmonious, idyllic world without women. Nature, once a female domain, is here colonized by men.

Enlightenment philosophers recognized the healthful benefits of nature. John Locke advocated the concept of “a sound mind in a sound body” and Jean-Jacques Rousseau recommended a vigorous outdoor upbringing for boys. Still, not until the nineteenth century was this idea taken seriously. Male health was especially worrisome in France, where revolutions, wars, and a declining birth rate generated concern about the health of the nation, which was only as sound as that of its (male) citizens. Increasingly, fresh air and nature were considered invigorating and strength-building. In addition, the public, male domain began to expand beyond city limits to include all outdoors. The feminine qualities of nature as a mysterious, life-giving force faded as new imperatives for a strong and healthy nation became urgent after France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. While national vitality was of particular concern in France, it was widespread throughout the West and coincided with a proliferation of male bathing images in the late nineteenth century.

In *Bathing Boys* by the German painter Max Liebermann (1847–1935), a dozen young boys, each engaged in a different aspect of bathing (or preparation), enjoy the Baltic shore, with its chilly waters and changeable skies (1898, Figure 12.19). These boys exemplify health, vitality, independence, and harmony with nature and each other, in an ideal seaside world, where the promise of youth encourages an optimistic view of the future. Emphasis on youth as healthily resistant to the intellectual and physical constraints of narrow-mindedness and tradition emerged earlier in the works of Blake and Runge (Chapter 4), prophetic in their perception of a new world in the making. On one level Liebermann's *Bathing Boys* is a straightforward depiction



Figure 12.19
Max Liebermann, *Bathing Boys*, 1898. Oil on canvas. Neue Pinokothek, Munich.

of youthful frolic, captured with careful attention to nuances of atmosphere, light, and movement. On another level, Liebermann's image conveys an optimistic message about the younger (male) generation on the cusp of a new century. Since physical health signaled mental health, these boys exemplify sound minds in sound bodies, a condition as important to the nation as to individuals.

Liebermann's adoption of Impressionist technique and subject matter was a choice with clear political implications in Germany. Officially Germanness was exemplified by photographically precise academic painting, which for many German artists also exemplified stodgy tradition and reactionary cultural and political conservatism. German political progressives, many of them Jewish, collected and championed Impressionist art; Berlin banker Julius Stern owned works by Degas, Manet, Monet, and Renoir. Liebermann, a Jew, cast his lot with Impressionism, individualism, and political progressivism in a cultural battle whose temperature rose to the boiling point by the 1930s. This is the main reason that in the twentieth century Impressionism has enjoyed higher status than Realism, and French art higher status than the art of other nations. Like many monarchies, Germany refused to officially participate in the 1889 Exposition universelle celebrating the centenary of the French Revolution, but allowed Liebermann to organize Germany's artistic contribution. The German section was privately financed, mainly by Jewish collectors and gallery owners who supported modern art and endorsed Liebermann's efforts to promote German modernism in an international arena.

CÉZANNE AND POSTIMPRESSIONISM

Postimpressionism is a catch-all term for paintings produced during the 1880s and 1890s that do not conform to the parameters established for Impressionism. Many artists who produced Postimpressionist paintings earlier produced works considered Realist (Vincent van Gogh) or Impressionist (van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Edvard Munch).

Postimpressionist Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), however, painted few works that fit these earlier categories. He modeled the heroic refusal to conform, characterizing the innovative spirit of modernist pioneers. Cézanne studied at the Académie Suisse (1861–62), and exhibited at the 1863 Salon des Refusés as well as at the first (1774) and third (1776) Impressionist exhibitions. Like Courbet, Cézanne came from a provincial family (Aix-en-Provence) and adopted a crude persona when he moved to Paris that concealed his bourgeois upbringing and ridiculed the Impressionist circle in which he sought acceptance. Unlike Courbet, Cézanne was a loner, sitting by himself at cafés, and spending more time in his native Provence than in Paris. Dedicated to his art and a failure by conventional standards—the École rejected his application, Salon juries rejected his submissions, critics maligned his works exhibited throughout the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s—Cézanne refused to conform. He abandoned law for art and focused on traditional categories: portraiture, genre, landscape, and still life. Cézanne copied at the Louvre, admired Rubens and Delacroix, and in the 1860s considered Courbet and Manet the two giants with whom he must contend. Cézanne made several innovations influencing twentieth-century art: imposing a perceptible and idiosyncratic intellectual order on subjects, disregarding the laws of perspective (which required representing all objects as if viewed from a single viewpoint), and emphasizing the two-dimensionality and object-ness of the canvas.

Cézanne's violent scenes of rape and murder repelled his contemporaries in the 1860s. While some have speculated about Cézanne's psychological abnormality, considering the deliberateness with which he made decisions, Cézanne's choices may have resulted from a kind of counter-cultural marketing strategy. Cézanne secured a niche as the fellow who paints dark, strange subjects. He understood the norms of academic and progressive art circles and decided not to conform.

Following the Franco-Prussian War (he dodged the draft), Cézanne abandoned violent contemporary subjects, shifting to traditional ones, particularly landscape. This redirection meshed with the interests of Impressionist colleagues, especially Pissarro, a close friend. In 1872, Cézanne moved to Auvers-sur-Oise (near Pissarro in Pointoise), where he stayed for several years. Like other artists, Cézanne learned by studying and reinterpreting the works of other artists, past and present. In 1869 he made the first of several paintings inspired by Manet's *Olympia* (1873–74, Figure 12.20). Here, he has stepped back to envision Olympia's hypothetical male visitor. The gentleman has removed his silk top hat to reveal his balding head, and he maintains a respectful distance from the boudoir performance. The dark-skinned maid appears to unwrap Olympia like an eagerly awaited present. Manet's flower bouquet has exploded into a mass of flowers and leaves, and the black cat appears transformed into a perky lapdog, which returns the viewer's gaze. Under the influence of Impressionism, Cézanne's palette evolved from dark to light, and his sketchy brushwork and the painting's small scale conveys the feeling of an on-the-spot sketch.

Unlike Manet, Cézanne never abandoned traditional subjects, but he did update them. He painted nudes in nature throughout his career, and in one of his last paintings, the *Large Bathers* (1906, Figure 12.21), the geometry of composition and brushstrokes vie for attention with the traditional subject. Two pyramidal groups of women anchor the pointed Gothic arch formed by the supple tree trunks, which bend in conformity to Cézanne's brush, not natural forces. The traditional subject and poses, presence of the church, tranquil setting, and composition reinforce a sense of stability that is undermined by lack of finish, decisive and staccato brushstrokes,



Figure 12.20
Paul Cézanne, *Modern Olympia*,
1873–74. Oil on canvas, 46
× 56 cm (18 × 22 in). Musée
d’Orsay, Paris.

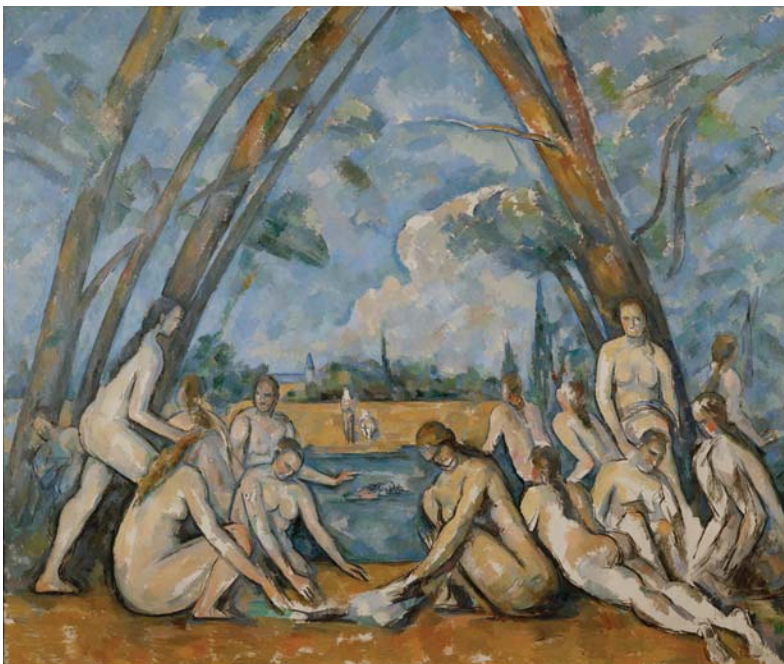


Figure 12.21
Paul Cézanne, *Large Bathers*,
1906. Oil on canvas, 208 ×
249 cm (6 ft 10 in × 8 ft 2 in).
Philadelphia Museum of Art.

independence of line and color, reduced palette (dominated by ochre and blue), and ambiguous activity. Although painted in oil, it looks more like watercolor. Although nude, the sketchily rendered women are not erotic, and a scene that should be inviting and idyllic is not. Nature is neither feminized nor masculinized; it is Cézanneized. Cézanne represented nature in a highly personalized manner that expressed a greater concern with formal issues (relationships between objects, colors, shapes, solids, and voids) than with ideas about the relationship between people and nature. When British

sculptor Henry Moore (1898–1986) saw *Large Bathers* decades later, he declared that it made as big an impact on him as did Chartres Cathedral (Lichtenstern 2008: 20).

THE MACCHIAIOLI

The Italian Macchiaioli artists worked in Florence. They have often been misinterpreted as precursors of Impressionism based on their small sketches, often on cardboard, that record dramatically contrasting patterns of light and shade. The Macchiaioli considered these works preparatory sketches, and it misrepresents their intentions to consider them harbingers of Impressionism. Many nineteenth-century artists, especially landscape painters, made loosely executed preliminary studies of light and shadow in preparation for “finished” paintings. The Macchiaioli’s sketches were never exhibited, indicating that the artists did not consider them viable independent works. Nonetheless, Macchiaioli artists did anticipate the Impressionists’ fascination with effects of light and shadow and their desire to communicate fresh, direct impressions.

This group of like-minded young artists formed in the late 1850s, following the enthusiastic reports of Serafino De Tivoli (1826–92) and his friends about paintings by Rosa Bonheur and Barbizon artists at the Paris Exposition universelle of 1855. They met regularly at the Caff  Michelangiolo in Florence and exhibited regularly at the official, annual exhibition held by Italy’s Society for the Promotion of the Arts, despite the fact that their compositions diverged from academic norms and were not as precisely detailed as the public expected. The Macchiaioli resembled the Pre-Raphaelites insofar as they participated in the official art world, but were chastised for their failure to uphold academic principles. In an 1868 pamphlet, *La Quinta Promotrice* (The Fifth Promotion Exhibition), Macchiaioli supporter Vittorio Imbriani reviewed the recent exhibition at the Society for the Promotion of Fine Arts in Naples, explaining that that *macchia* was:

the representation of the first and characteristic effect which impresses itself on the eye of the artist, whether he actually sees the object or the scene, or whether he perceives them in his imagination or his memory. It is that which is salient and characteristic in the effect of light produced by a special grouping of persons or of variously colored things.

(Imbriani 1868: 545)

Interest in light/dark contrast emerges in *The Ward of Madwomen at San Bonifazio in Florence* (1865, Figure 12.22) by Telemaco Signorini (1835–1901). In predominantly monochromatic tones of ocher, Signorini depicted the spartan and spotless fourteenth-century hospital now converted into an insane asylum. Consistent with the era’s obsession with female deviance, Signorini depicted only the women’s ward. Although these women manifest a range of aberrant behavior—violent gestures, cowering, apathy—order reigns. The blank walls and repeated rectangular forms reinforce an impression of control and efficiency. This combined with emphatic perspective makes the viewer, trapped in the gated room with the inmates, feel more like an observer than one of the incarcerated, as in Goya’s *Yard with Madmen* (Figure 4.12). Following a visit to Signorini in 1875, Degas confessed to a mutual acquaintance that *Ward of Madwomen* “fired him with enthusiasm” (Broude 1987: 139).



Figure 12.22
 Telemaco Signorini, *The Ward of Madwomen at San Bonifazio in Florence*, 1865. Oil on canvas, 65 × 59 cm (25½ × 23 ¼ in). Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Ca' Pesaro, Venice.

CONCLUSION

Impressionist art documented in a truthful and dispassionate manner the appearance of life and landscape in the late nineteenth century. Impressionist artists often selected motifs and vantage points that were typical of the era and characteristic of the artist's own corner of the world. Impressionist paintings conveyed a range of ideas about modernity—from exhilaration to anxiety—and often revealed attitudes about social class, economic change, technology, and scientific discovery. Impressionist artists experimented to find techniques suited to their ideas, whether it was the staccato and turbulent pace of modern life, or the odd visual effects of everyday experience. Development of a signature style, one clearly identifiable with a particular artist, signaled an artist's independence and creativity. In a world where economic success demanded ingenuity as well as diligence, originality and modernity assumed unprecedented significance. At the same time, fascination with the appearance and structure of a rapidly changing world that dominated in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, yielded to an escalating sense of unease and a desire to understand not just the structure but the larger significance of the changes underway. Did they portend a new and harmonious era in which technology would lighten the load and enable people to live in health and harmony? Or were greedy humans guiding the world on a dangerous path to desolation and destruction? It was the quest for deeper psychological meanings that occupied increasing numbers of artists, intellectuals, and the public at large during the final decades of the nineteenth century.

Because of the large international community of artists working in Paris during the 1870s, news of Impressionism spread quickly. Reactions to its bourgeois subject matter, working outdoors, and loose brushwork varied greatly among young foreign artists. At one end of the spectrum, the Italian Macchiaioli rejected Impressionism. Sculptor Adriano Cecioni (1838–86) wrote in 1873: “Everything must be sure and decisive, without sacrificing the smallest detail; the total effect must be obtained by means of that infinite gradation which is in nature” (Cecioni 1905: 117). At the other end, Max Liebermann and the Krakow-based Young Poland group embraced Impressionism’s short and distinctly applied brushstrokes partly for anti-establishment reasons. Within the context of an occupied and divided Poland, Impressionism operated as a political gesture expressing ethnic solidarity and cultural independence from the values of the Vienna Academy and, by extension, the Austro-Hungarian Empire.



For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter and pictures of Impressionist locales—such as Gare St Lazare and where Monet and Caillebotte studied law—in today’s Paris see www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.

Symbolism

Symbolist critics considered Naturalism, Impressionism, and Realism superficial and called for an art that expressed ideas and feelings, not appearances. Thus, Symbolist art is distinguished by an artist's urge to convey a transcendent truth, an idea. The first and most famous declaration of the Symbolist agenda was published by the art critic Jean Moréas in the 18 September 1886 issue of the popular Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro*. Moréas asserted that Symbolists were "enemies of instruction, of proclamation, of false sensitivity, and of objective description ..." (Moréas 1886: 2). In other words, Symbolists produced honest, subjective works of art whose purpose was not to educate or describe, but to express ideas truthfully. The poet Stéphane Mallarmé asserted that "To name an object is to suppress three quarters of the enjoyment of the poem, which is made to be discovered little by little: to *suggest* it, that is the dream. It is the perfect usage of this mystery which constitutes the symbol..." (Michaud 1961: 774).

Artists signaled their Symbolist purpose by manipulating form, color, and composition in a way that indicated that their artwork's meaning was not merely illustrative and sometimes by a helpful title. Many artists went through a Symbolist phase, often choosing titles identifying their subject: Anxiety, Dialogue with Nature, Maternity, Sin. There are two branches of Symbolism: the Idealist and the Decadent. The Idealist branch of Symbolism consisted of optimistic artists who created Symbolist works out of a desire to reform society. The Decadent branch of Symbolist consisted of pessimistic artists who created works for purely personal, expressive reasons. Extroverted optimists believed in the power of images to effect change, to improve society, whereas introverted optimists were more concerned with attaining personal enlightenment. Extroverted pessimists celebrated hedonism and degeneracy, whereas introverted pessimists sought escape from a harsh world. Both Decadents and Idealists explored unconscious and non-rational forces and tended to present a polarized view of women as either virgins (Idealists) or whores (Decadents). Although Symbolist artworks are even more diverse in appearance than Impressionist ones, there are several visual elements typical of Symbolism. Symbolist works tend to be static and simplified in form, composition, and color. Pictorial space is often shallow, and the viewer is often forced into an intimate relationship with the image.

While aesthetically, Symbolism originated as a reaction to Impressionism, Naturalism, and Realism, three additional factors contributed to its emergence in the mid-1880s: individualism, philosophical pessimism, and a belief in an invisible reality. Individualism was an outgrowth of the radical Enlightenment belief in the equality

"The Symbolists, so far as they are honestly degenerate and imbecile, can think only in a mystical, i.e., in a confused way. The unknown is to them more powerful than the known; the activity of the organic nerves preponderates over that of the cerebral cortex; their emotions overrule their ideas. When persons of this kind have poetic and artistic instincts, they naturally want to give expression to their own mental state. They cannot make use of definite words of clear import, for their own consciousness holds no clearly-defined univocal ideas which could be embodied in such words. They choose, therefore, vague equivocal words, because these best conform to their ambiguous and equivocal ideas. The more indefinite, the more obscure a word is, so much the better does it suit the purpose of the imbecile, and it is notorious that among the insane this habit goes so far that, to express their ideas, which have become quite formless, they invent new words, which are no longer merely obscure, but devoid of all meaning. We have already seen that, for the typical degenerate, reality has no significance."

Source: Max Nordeau, *Degeneration*. Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, p. 118.

and value of all humans, which, after more than a century of indoctrination about female inferiority, usually meant just men. Pessimism had its roots in the thoughts of the German philosopher Arnold Schopenhauer, whose writings were popularized in French intellectual circles during the 1870s. His most influential book, *The World as Will and Idea* (written in 1819 and translated into French in 1886) asserted that everything beyond the self exists only insofar as one is conscious of it. Consequently, truth is unknowable, and there are as many realities as there are people to imagine them. Schopenhauer's extreme subjectivity was pessimistic because it denied the existence of any true and permanent values or entities in the world. It expressed the despair felt by many toward the end of the nineteenth century. Assumptions about how the world functioned were challenged and the importance of the individual's place in it was shaken by changes taking place in philosophy, politics, religion, science, and society. Belief in invisible realities was reinforced by recent scientific discoveries such as sound waves and x-rays; the belief that dead individuals could be contacted through séances; new religions, such as theosophy, that held that there were higher levels of reality imperceptible to unenlightened individuals; and increasing use of psychotropic drugs (absinthe, hashish, opium).

SYMBOLIST PRECURSORS

Four painters were influential precursors to Symbolist art: the Swiss painter Arnold Böcklin, the French painter Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. While they belonged to an earlier generation than most Symbolists, and their works differed from those produced by their own contemporaries, they were "discovered" and appreciated in the mid-1880s because their paintings seemed prophetic of Symbolism. Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* (Figure 7.19), for instance, embodied withdrawal into imaginary realms and unfulfilled longing, common themes in Symbolist art.

Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824–98) was the most universally admired artist in the late nineteenth century. If Manet's paintings were ambiguous in a way that irked the establishment, Puvis's were ambiguous in a way that conformists and individualists alike found inspiring. He studied privately with Eugène Delacroix and Thomas Couture, and exhibited at the Salon and at private galleries such as Durand-Ruel.

By the end of his life Puvis had permanent installations of monumental paintings in public buildings in Paris (Panthéon, Sorbonne, city hall) and elsewhere (Boston Public Library). More than 500 guests attended the 1895 banquet that Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Auguste Rodin organized in his honor; Rodin declared Puvis “the greatest artist of our time” (Rodin 1911: 305). This assessment was reinforced at the 1913 Armory Show in New York—a path-breaking exhibition that presented the latest French art to American audiences and included works by Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp—where Puvis was represented by 15 works.

Puvis’s most famous painting, *The Poor Fisherman* (Figure 13.1)—shown at the 1881 Salon (attracting more than 300,000 visitors)—received mixed reviews, which surprised the artist. “But what is it they do not understand?” Puvis commented to Gauguin, “The picture is very simple” (Wattenmaker 1975: 20). A few years later, the painting’s significance was better appreciated: following its 1887 exhibition at Durand-Ruel, the French government purchased *The Poor Fisherman* for the Luxembourg Museum. Seventeen-year-old Maurice Denis (Chapter 14) visited the show and wrote in his diary: “I found the decorative, calm, and simple aspect of his paintings very fine ... this quiet and mysterious impression on the spirit, both restful and elevating” (Denis 1957: 67). While the title *Poor Fisherman* suggests a theme consistent with social Realism, the image’s generic quality gave it broader resonance. The fisherman’s scrawny physique and passive pose were non-threatening (in contrast to Courbet’s *Stone Breakers*, Figure 10.7); in fact, his bowed head and clasped hands suggest submissiveness similar to Leibl’s near-contemporary *Three Women in Church* (Figure 10.14). The fisherman’s Christ-like appearance, combined with the nude baby and young mother, evoke the Holy Family. Evocation, suggestion, symbol—these are the qualities that appealed to the Symbolist generation.

Puvis was independent, seldom anchoring his works in academic tradition or addressing current events, and *Poor Fisherman* includes neither obvious contemporary references nor allusions to familiar old master paintings. Unlike most artists, Puvis never made outdoor landscape studies. Instead, he relied on memory, asserting that



Figure 13.1
Pierre Puvis de Chavannes,
The Poor Fisherman, 1881.
Oil on canvas, 193 × 156 cm
(6 ft 3 in × 5 ft 1½ in). Musée
d’Orsay, Paris.

“abbreviation and simplification” best conveyed the essence of nature (Alexandre 1905: xviii). However, Puvis did make compositional studies for his paintings, whose static and peaceful quality suggest careful planning rather than spontaneity. Puvis’s concern with overall visual impact more than details was described at the time as “decorative.” To this end, Puvis experimented, mixing wax with oil paint in order to give his canvasses the matte surface of fresco painting. *Poor Fisherman* was modern in its ambiguity. Interpretation was not fixed, but reflected the values and experience of individual viewers. Its passive figures could be interpreted as affirming the social order; its muted colors and static composition encouraged inward reflection. Exasperated by the conservatism of the Salon juries, who complained about the quasi-abstract simplicity of his clearly outlined and simplified forms, Puvis exhibited there for the last time in 1889. Together with Rodin, Puvis established a more liberal exhibiting organization, the Société des Beaux Arts.

Significantly, when Puvis described his creative process, he sounded like a Symbolist: “A work of art is born from a kind of confused emotion within which it is contained, like the bird in the egg. The thought which lies within this emotion, I turn it over and over until I can view it as clearly and intelligibly as possible” (Wattenmaker 1975: 3). Therefore, more than a decade before Symbolism was born, Puvis purposefully created compositions generated by the subjective, emotional, and imaginative forces of his own psyche. His paintings functioned as equivalents for ideas rather than descriptions of specific events or places. And it was this creative process that also appealed to artists who called themselves Symbolist.

Gustave Moreau’s technique—ornate, expressive, and colorful—contrasted with Puvis’s. And in contrast to the apparent flatness of Puvis’s paintings, Moreau’s spaces were multi-layered and complex. The fact that paintings such as *Orpheus* (Figure 11.11) expressed personal feelings and were open to a variety of interpretations appealed to Symbolist artists. Moreau’s subjects were also quite different from Puvis’s: their pessimism appealed to Decadents, whereas Puvis’s contemplative mood appealed more to Idealists. Like many members of the earlier Romantic generation, Moreau and other Decadent artists were attracted to sublime themes: terror, violence, and death.

Paintings by Arnold Böcklin (1827–1901) were well known through reproductions in prints and periodicals and through exhibitions. He painted five versions of his most famous painting, *Island of the Dead* (1886, Figure 13.2), beginning

Figure 13.2
Arnold Böcklin, *Island of the Dead*, 1886. Oil on canvas, 154 × 80 cm (5 ft ½ in × 2 ft 7½ in). Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig. First version painted 1880 (Kunstmuseum, Basel).



in 1880; the Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud received a print of it from a patient in 1900, and the Swedish playwright August Strindberg used it as the backdrop to the final scene of *A Dream Play* (1902), whose occultist subject is the interaction of beings on various planes of existence. Although completed before any definitions of Symbolism were formulated, it embodied two of its central themes—silence and death—in a composition that anticipated the static, stripped-to-essentials format of many Symbolist paintings. Böcklin studied landscape painting at the Düsseldorf Academy (1845–47), and spent the subsequent 20 years working in Rome and Munich before settling in Florence in 1870. Böcklin had a number of loyal collectors and beginning in the 1880s the Berlin art dealer Fritz Gurlitt exhibited his work regularly.

Despite its popularity, *Island of the Dead* was atypical of Böcklin's work, most of which evoked the pantheistic idea that nature was populated with unseen beings, a belief then prevalent among superstitious peasants. For instance, *Silence of the Forest* (1885, Figure 13.3) pictures a unicorn wandering in a forest. Although a mythical creature, it seems a reasonable part of this scene. A critic writing in the March 1896 issue of the influential English art periodical *The Studio* asked the reader:

Have you not often, as you enter a forest, been overcome by strange feelings? The twigs snap under your tread ... but beyond there is a strange humming, a rustle superhuman in its unchangeable monotony. Is it the whispering of these evergreen pillars reporting the intruder to their master, the spirit of the forest? Böcklin has enticed him forward. Like a unicorn in form, he ventures with one foot beyond the border of his realm, casting a restive look of wonder upon the world of sunshine beyond.

(Anonymous 1896: 74)



Figure 13.3

Arnold Böcklin, *Silence of the Forest*, 1885. Oil on wood panel, 73 × 58.5 cm (28¾ × 23¼ in). The National Museum in Poznan.

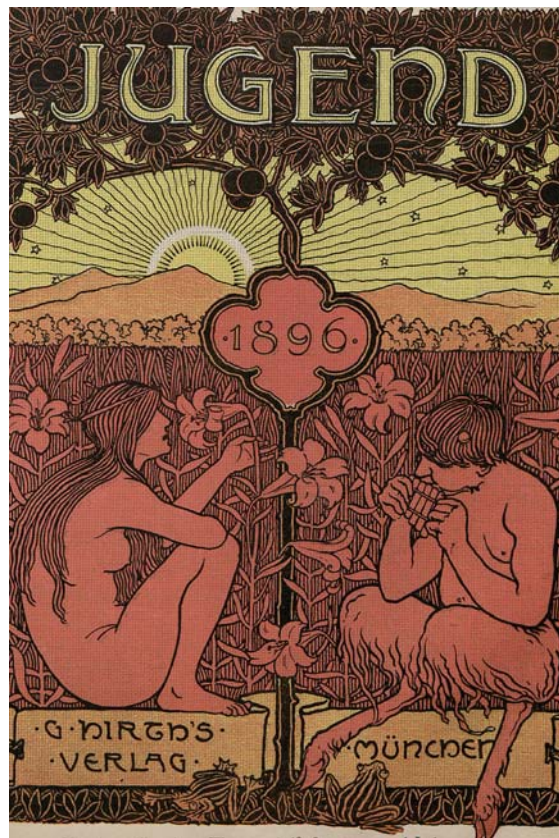


Figure 13.4
Anonymous, cover of *Jugend*,
vol. 1, no. 32 (1896).

This urge to reinvest nature with a sense of wonder and mystery evolved from a desire to combat urban alienation and restore to people a sense of well-being and connectedness to nature (Figure 13.4).

In addition to hinting at hidden forces in nature, Böcklin created a static image encouraging contemplation. For this reason his painting appealed to Symbolist painters, as did the fact that it actively engaged the viewer by creating eye contact, a modernist strategy used also by Coubet (*Young Ladies*, Figure 9.12) and Manet (*Olympia*, Figure 11.10). The unicorn looks directly at the viewer, who also seems to be a wanderer in the forest—a chance encounter without surprise or fear. Viewer participation, whether imaginative, as here, or actual, as in Rodin's *Burgbers of Calais*, (Figure 13.9), was a modernist feature occurring with increasing frequency after 1900. Fascination with the idea of animate nature emerged toward the end of the century, when industrialists were exploiting natural resources without regard for aesthetics or sustainability. Mining in Belgium, Wales, and the Alsace region of France (where Europe's largest iron ore field was discovered at Longwy-Briey in the 1880s), and deforestation in Scandinavia, Poland, and Russia scarred the landscape, disrupted the age-old rhythms and structure of rural society, and generated poverty and illness.

ANIMATE NATURE

Ernst Josephson's *Water Sprite* (1884, Figure 13.5), was the first Scandinavian Symbolist painting, and constitutes a hybrid of Naturalism and Symbolism. The Swedish artist sought to express the continuing belief among rural Scandinavians in the existence



Figure 13.5

Ernst Josephson, *Water Sprite*, 1884. Oil on canvas, 216 × 150 cm (7 ft × 4 ft 11 in). Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, Stockholm.

of mythical creatures populating nature. Such beliefs were common in Europe's less industrialized regions, and intellectuals interpreted this as a charming residue of the prehistoric past that indicated a holistic, biomystical relationship between humans and nature. The water sprite legend describes a companion of Lucifer who was expelled from Heaven. His eternal regret for making the wrong choice was expressed in music. Living alone deep in the forest, the water sprite played sad yet enchanting fiddle melodies that lured unwary wanderers to their deaths in lakes and rivers. The water sprite also symbolized the artist, who created beauty inspired from the depths of his soul (according to Freud, water symbolizes the unconscious). Josephson identified with the solitary, tragic figure, partly because his artworks were condemned by critics as coarse and expressionistic, and partly because he felt responsible for the childhood drowning of his beloved sister Nelly. Because Josephson was dedicated to the precepts of Naturalism, he executed much of the painting outside, directly before the motif. He set up his easel by the Norwegian waterfall at Eggedal and, when he was done painting it, Josephson hired a young farmer to model out-of-doors for the water sprite. Josephson's goal was to be as true to nature as possible in some aspects of his painting. At the same time, he wanted to indicate that *Water Sprite* represented an imaginary realm, not reality. For this reason, Josephson used gold leaf for the unique Norwegian folk instrument, the Hardanger fiddle (with eight strings instead of four, and a lion's head instead of a scroll), to show that the picture represented an idea

and not the visible world. Myth and music were typical Symbolist themes, inspired, at least in part, by the German composer Richard Wagner. Josephson studied at the Academy for Independent Artists in Stockholm (1867–76) and spent 1874 in Paris, where he studied at the École des Beaux-Arts and copied master works in the Louvre. He lived in France from 1879 to 1888, when a psychotic episode brought him back to Sweden.

MUSIC

Wagner had a huge influence on the Symbolists, who admired his narratives inspired by German myths and legends, his ambition to express universal ideas, and his goal of synaesthesia (the evocation of one sense experience by another). Maurice Denis, for instance, found that the blue background of the *Mona Lisa*, located then as now in the Louvre, made him think of the overture of Wagner's 1845 opera *Tannhäuser* (Maurer 1978: 42). And James Whistler claimed that, "as music is the poetry of sound, painting is the poetry of color" (Whistler 1890). This interactive relationship between color and sound was based on the scientific research of Hermann von Helmholtz, who explained in *Physiological Optics* (1867) that the perception of both color and sound was due to the intersection of invisible waves with the senses.

Wagner's most famous work, the Ring Cycle of four interrelated operas (*The Gold of the Rhine*, *The Valkyries*, *Siegfried*, and *The Twilight of the Gods*), was loosely based on German mythology. In his story, Wagner sought to create a total work of art, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which embodied all human emotions and experiences: joy and suffering, loss and discovery, birth and death, freedom and fate. His operas were Sublime: colossal, mystical, eerie, and terrifying. In creating a universal, all-encompassing statement about human experience, he utilized words, music, and set design. Wagner was so admired that after his death in 1883 a group of French intellectuals established a cultural periodical in his honor, *Revue Wagnérienne*. In a review there of the 1885 Paris Salon, the Polish critic Teodor de Wyzewa praised Puvis de Chavannes, Odilon Redon, and Whistler as exemplars of Wagnerism in art, explaining that: "Wagnerism is above all the exclusion of all petty criticisms, slavish exercises, of works of art that have not been inspired exclusively by the artist's hunger for divine, speculative creation" (Wyzewa 1885: 155). Schopenhauer declared music as supreme among the arts because of its immaterial quality, enabling it to evoke emotions and memories; it was the art most dependent on the imagination.

MUSIC AND GENIUS

Joseph Lux, writing for *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* (German Art and Decoration), proclaimed the German artist Max Klinger's *Beethoven* (1899–1902, Figure 13.6) "visible music," noting that "everything is calculated for its musical effect in order to be for the eye what Beethoven's compositions are for the ear" (Lux 1902: 476). Lux felt that Klinger (1857–1920) realized the Symbolist goal of creating a visual equivalent of music. This life-size, multi-media sculpture of the German Romantic composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) combined Academic and Symbolist elements. Klinger achieved a degree of realism by using Beethoven's death mask as the model for his face and white marble for the figure. The bronze throne and contrasting "cloth" make the figure seem more lifelike. At the same time, Klinger associated Beethoven with Zeus and Prometheus, the Titan punished by the gods for



Figure 13.6

Max Klinger, *Beethoven*, 1899–1902. Sculpture group of various colored stones and bronze, with glass, metal, ivory and precious stone inlay, height: 310 cm (10 ft 2 in). Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig.

sharing the gift of fire with humans. (Prometheus had his liver pecked out by an eagle daily and it grew back nightly.) Klinger evoked here the famous sculpture of Zeus executed in the fifth century BCE by Phidias, which displayed the king of the gods in heroic half-nudity seated on a throne.

Klinger's extravagant homage (financed by the artist) utilized marble, bronze, ivory, mother-of-pearl, and semi-precious stones. It was a costly, private offering to this music god that evoked gifts to deities presented in ancient and "primitive" societies. Wagner wrote several articles about Beethoven beginning in 1846 and in 1870 wrote an unpublished book about the composer, celebrating Beethoven's triumph over deafness to produce extraordinary music, a feat Wagner felt elevated Beethoven to the level of a tragic deity. Many considered Beethoven a genius, which had a particular meaning at the time. A genius possessed singular creative abilities analogous to God's divine power. This creative power required imagination, the trait distinguishing humans from animals. Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer argued that many animal species could imitate but only humans could imagine and create for aesthetic purposes. Geniuses (including true artists) possessed extraordinary creative abilities that set them apart from most people. Admiration of genius is a hallmark of modernism.



Read a contemporary critic's explanation of *Beethoven* as a "daring experiment" at www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

RODIN: ABSTRACT IDEAS IN HUMAN FORM

Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) began as an Academic Realist, but began producing Symbolist sculpture in the 1880s. He is considered the father of modern sculpture because of five innovations impacting sculptors in the twentieth century: aesthetic appreciation of accident and of the fragment, recombining parts, polyvalent meanings, and the integration of sculpture and viewer space. The child of working-class parents, Rodin earned a living by helping sculptors like Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse (1824–87) make decorative ornamentation for the homes of wealthy patrons. Rodin did his own work on Sundays, and he was eager to debut at the Salon with a work that would attract sufficient positive attention and patronage that he could give up decorative work. His choice was understandably conservative: a head of a boxer (*Mask of the Man with the Broken Nose*, 1863). Inspired by the numerous classical heads of athletes displayed at the Louvre, Rodin used a real model, as had his Roman predecessors. Rodin strove for realism, copying every surface nuance and the muscular and skeletal structure underneath. One day, Rodin returned to his studio to find the sculpture had fallen to the floor, the back of its head smashed to bits. Rodin liked the sculpture this way; after all it is the face that is important, not the back of the head. This incident opened Rodin's eyes to the expressive possibilities of accident and to the fragment: accident eliminated parts superfluous to the sculpture's primary purpose. Rodin realized that accident plays as important a role in life and art as planning. Moreover, ancient works were rarely intact—many ancient heads in the Louvre were missing bodies, noses, or ears. Rodin was also excited that an accident brought his work closer to the ancients. Unfortunately, the 1864 Salon jury was not ready to embrace the creative potential of either accident or the fragment and rejected Rodin's *Mask*.

At the 1877 Salon, Rodin's *Age of Bronze* provoked accusations of cheating by making a body cast (as Clésinger had done in 1847—Figure 11.3). Rodin was outraged because he worked intensively for 18 months to achieve a lifelike, life-size figure without resorting to short cuts. For 200 years, art academies valued an artist's ability to render with precision the contours of the male body, but Rodin transgressed norms by doing it too well. Rodin transformed the Salon controversy into a media event by publicly challenging his accusers, a clever decision, because commissions for portrait busts (in which detailed realism is prized) began streaming in. While this did enable him to abandon decorative work, Rodin aspired to make a major public monument, the most prestigious undertaking for a sculptor.

In 1880, the French government decided to build a museum of decorative arts in Paris and commissioned Rodin to make its portal. In both format and theme, Rodin began his project in an acceptable way. He chose Dante's *Inferno* as his subject, a popular source among academic artists since the eighteenth century. For his format, Rodin looked to the Ten Commandment portal on the Madeleine Church in Paris (1834–41) by Henri de Triqueti (1803–74), which in turn was based on Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise* (1404–24) on the Florence baptistry. Rodin's protean imagination soon moved beyond his initial conception of tidy, narrative boxes with selected scenes from Dante, to a chaotic field that evoked the eternal suffering to which Ugolino and others were condemned (began 1880, Figure 13.7). Rodin created a conceptual equivalent to Dante's text, not illustrations of particular scenes, as John Flaxman had done in the 1790s. In *The Gates of Hell*, Rodin explored the stories to reveal their deeper, universal truths. Rodin interpreted Dante's *Inferno* as an allegory of modernity characterized by uncertainty, frustration, misery, and torment, mental as well as physical.



Figure 13.7

Auguste Rodin, *The Gates of Hell*, 1880–90. Bronze, 600 × 400 × 100 cm (19 ft 8¼ in × 13 ft 1½ in × 3 ft 1½ in). Musée Rodin, Paris.

Above the *Inferno*'s chaos sits Dante, creator of the *Inferno*, a figure simultaneously representing Rodin, who conceived the *Gates*. This association is confirmed by Rodin's requesting a cast of this figure, *The Thinker* (Figure 13.8), as his grave marker. Removed from the context of the *Gates*, *The Thinker* symbolizes all thinkers, opening the possibility for the viewer to identify with him. Placed over the *Gates*, *Dante-Rodin-Thinker* is absorbed in thought, and the doors, with their roiling, intertwined, and anguished figures, function as a kind of "thought bubble," a device used earlier by Goya (Figure 4.8) and Bastien-Lepage (Figure 10.4). The *Gates* and the seated figure reigning over them incorporate multiple meanings simultaneously, in a path-breaking example of polyvalence. *The Thinker*'s posture recalls numerous previous figures, including the Iroquois in West's *Death of Wolfe* (Figure 3.1) and the anguished man in Géricault's *Raft* (Figure 3.11).

Just as Degas distorted the position of his dancer (Figure 12.11) to convey the clumsiness, hard work, and physical discomfort dancers must overcome to realize their potential, Rodin arranged the *The Thinker*'s posture to create a physical analogy of anxiety, stress, and tension. Although based on earlier depictions of Ugolino (Reynolds, Figure 1.19; Carpeaux, Figure 11.9), Rodin twisted the figure's torso, so that his left elbow rests on his right knee—an awkward and uncomfortable position usually ignored in pop culture references to Rodin's *Thinker*.

When the French government abandoned the idea of building a separate museum of decorative arts and decided to house the collections in the Louvre, *The*

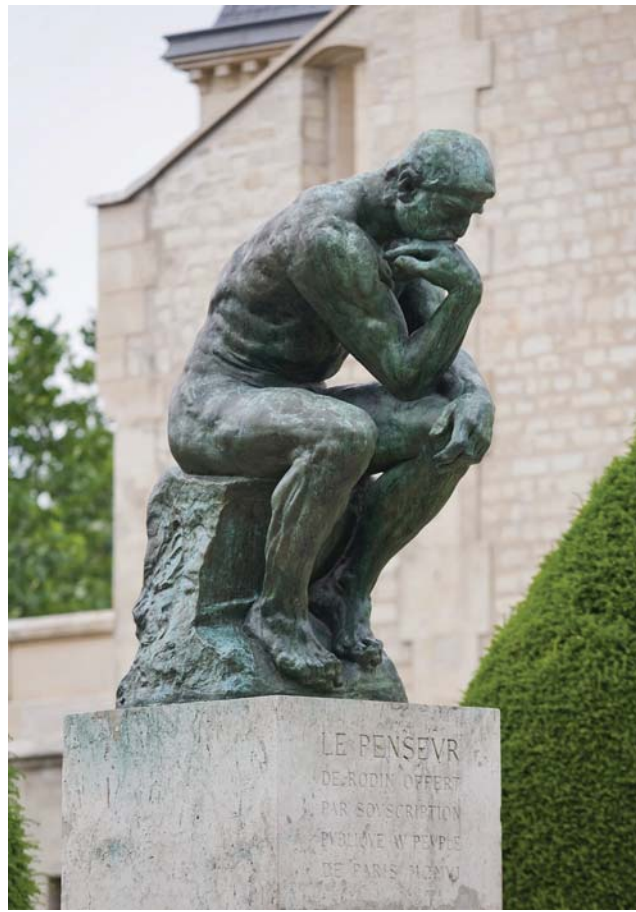


Figure 13.8
Auguste Rodin, *The Thinker*,
1880–82. Bronze, 72 × 40 ×
58 cm (18¾ × 15¾ × 22¾ in).
Musée Rodin, Paris.

Gates shifted from a concrete project with a deadline to a cauldron of experimentation with which Rodin sporadically tinkered. He used it to try out various ideas, wiring the small plaster figures in shifting combinations to the 20-foot high frame. Many of Rodin's large-scale independent sculptures began their life as fragments on the *Gates*: *Ugolino*, *Prodigal Son*, *The Sirens*. Between 1908 and 1910, the *Gates* were reassembled based on photographs and Rodin's memory, with the intention of installing them in the seminary of St Sulpice in Paris, a project that also was never realized. When Rodin died, the *Gates* stood incomplete in his studio, and it was not until 1928 that they were first cast in bronze.

With progress slow on the museum of decorative arts plans, Rodin pursued other opportunities. In 1884, the city of Calais announced a competition for a monument commemorating Eustache de St-Pierre, a local historical figure. St-Pierre's story constituted an important episode in Calais history. The city administration felt a monument to him strategically placed on the border between the old city (whose wall had recently been demolished) and the new city (inhabited by recently arrived industrial workers) might generate a shared sense of urban identity among factions that were suspicious of each other. The story of St-Pierre, as told by Jean Froissart (1337–1404) in his *Chronicle of the Hundred Years' War* (1336–1453), was one of civic leadership and personal self-sacrifice with a stoic resolve worthy of David's *Brutus* (Figure 2.9). When the English King Edward III besieged Calais in 1347 and demanded the surrender of its city council, St-Pierre led colleagues humbly dressed



Figure 13.9
Auguste Rodin, *The Burgheers of Calais*, 1884–89. Bronze, life-size. Calais.

in burlap sacks to the camp of Edward III. (The incident ended happily, with the pregnant Queen Philippa allegedly pleading for the Calais men's lives in order not to generate bad karma for her unborn child. The bravery and subsequent loyalty of the council members was rewarded by Edward III with freedom and large tracts of land, suggesting that the surrender might just have been a publicity stunt.)

Determined to win this commission, Rodin submitted a proposal that included life-size statues of St-Pierre and his colleagues. Six sculptures for the price of one was an offer the Calais government did not refuse, and Rodin got the commission. His ideas quickly evolved from a conventional representation in a time-honored format (figures atop a triumphal arch), to a bold and unusual solution with psychological profundity. Rodin had to periodically submit models to show how the commission was developing, and the Calais council became alarmed when Rodin submitted a model which removed the Burgheers from their high perch and placed them instead processing one after

another away from the market square. Rodin wanted to sink the bases of these life-size figures into the pavement so that passers-by could mingle with them and imaginatively participate in the trauma of these men, who six centuries earlier had submitted to an uncertain fate in order to save their city. In this way, viewers would better understand how a single event could generate a range of responses—from resignation to despair shown in the postures and expressions of the burghers—and the monument would have unprecedented pertinence, evoking the past in the present.

Interacting with sculpture in this way was too radical a concept in the 1880s, when everyone expected the boundary between sculpture and life to be secured by a base or pedestal. People were accustomed to admiring past heroes from a safe psychological distance. Rodin's plan to place sculpture in "real" space transgressed norms; eventually, he compromised by assembling the six burghers onto a single base (Figure 13.9). Unfortunately, the physical and psychological impact of encountering these figures close up was neutralized by the cautious city council, which placed Rodin's sculpture atop a tall base, surrounded by a small fence, when it was unveiled in 1895.

Here Rodin utilized his strategy of recycling: the heads of at least two burghers come from the same model, and one of the hands is used several times. Rodin also incorporated accident and revealed to the viewer the process of the sculpture's making. Careful examination of this sculpture reveals gouges, thumbprints, and even blobs of bronze purposefully left after the polishing process. These demonstrate that the sculpture is a human-made work, the product of transformation and accident, like everything else living. In its current form, there is also a cinematic aspect, since in order to see the sculpture in its entirety the viewer must move around it.



Find out what writer Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926) thought about the *Burghers* at www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

PESSIMISTIC WITHDRAWAL

The Belgian artist Fernand Khnopff (1858–1921) attended Schopenhauer's lectures in Paris in 1878, and his painting *I Lock My Door Upon Myself* (1891, Figure 13.10) embodied Schopenhauerian pessimism. The title comes from a poem by the Pre-Raphaelite poet Christina Rossetti, sister of painter Dante Gabriel. Khnopff's inspiration by a poem indicates the interrelationship between art and literature in Symbolism and the Pre-Raphaelite influence. The fantasy worlds constructed by Pre-Raphaelite painters, populated by beautiful, long-limbed women with loose, wavy hair,

Figure 13.10

Fernand Khnopff, *I Lock My Door Upon Myself*, 1891. Oil on canvas, 73 × 141 cm (2 ft 4½ in × 4 ft 7½ in). Neue Pinokothek, Munich.



appealed to Khnopff and others who sought to escape from the crude, noisy, stressful circumstances of everyday life into a dream world of their own construction. Khnopff had ties to the Pre-Raphaelites: he spoke English fluently, and was friends with Edward Burne-Jones (1833–98). Khnopff’s motto, “one has only oneself,” evidenced a mistrust and rejection of modern industrial society typifying the Decadent world view (Khnopff 2004: 71).

Khnopff took a decorative approach to *I Lock My Door upon Myself*: he depicted a room with ill-defined spatial relationships through a series of interlocking rectangles. This spatial ambiguity amplified the Decadent sense of insecurity and mistrust regarding the individual’s relationship to the world. Uncertainty was further suggested by the enigmatic, red-haired woman, resting wearily on a table, piano, or coffin, whose eyes stare at the viewer without recognition. Who is this person and what is she doing? What is the significance of the objects and images in the room? Behind the woman is a bust of Hypnos, god of sleep, of dreams, and of the unconscious. This sculpture was the centerpiece of a shrine designed by the artist for his elegant, fortress-like home in Brussels. Khnopff designed the residence and had it built as a bastion against the vulgar, outside world—he was literally able to lock his door upon himself.

Inspiration for constructing a luxurious personal refuge may have come from the widely read novel *Against the Grain* (1884) by Joris-Karl Huysmans. The main character, Duke Jean des Esseintes, was a hypersensitive aristocrat who built a luxurious, solitary dream world. Garrisoned from the “hideous boors who feel themselves bound to talk loud and laugh uproariously in restaurants and cafés,” des Esseintes indulged himself in eccentric whims, such as having his pet turtle’s shell gilded and inlaid with precious gems, a venture fatal to the turtle (Huysmans 1969: 25). Des Esseintes was the stereotypical Decadent, the product of a corrupt and degenerating family and society, isolated in a self-created, domestic nirvana. The story of des Esseintes demonstrated the impotence and depravity of the European aristocracy—spoiled, fickle, and uninterested in, not to say incapable of, constructive participation in a modernizing and democratizing society. Khnopff abandoned legal studies for art, studying at the Académie Royale in Brussels from 1876 to 1879. Financial independence gave Khnopff freedom. He traveled frequently to Paris, saw the 1878 Exposition universelle, exhibited for the first time with Salon de l’Essor (Brussels) in 1881, and was a founding member of the secessionist group Les XX in 1883. Khnopff was the Brussels correspondent for *The Studio* beginning in 1895, exhibited with the bizarre Salon Rose + Croix (Chapter 14) in the 1890s, and was a passionate social reformer.

Khnopff’s motto “one has only oneself” expressed the individualism and introspection typical of Symbolism. This withdrawal into private worlds, particularly the secret recesses of one’s own psyche, is also embodied in the sculpture of the Belgian artist George Minne (1866–1941). Minne studied at the Académie Royale in Ghent from 1879 to 1886 and worked as an illustrator and sculptor. He exhibited with Les XX in Brussels and participated in numerous international exhibitions including the Salon de la Rose + Croix in Paris. Kneeling figures with arms pressed against their own bodies began appearing in his sketchbooks in the early 1890s, and were first realized in sculpture in 1896, when Minne produced *Kneeling Youth* (1898, Figure 13.11), the basis for his *Fountain of Kneeling Youths*. This attenuated figure evidences Minne’s admiration for Gothic sculpture, and is part of the era’s general fascination with the Middle Ages. Minne admired it as a period of spirituality contrasting with what he



Figure 13.11
Georges Minne, *Kneeling Youth*,
1898. Marble. Neue Galerie,
New York.

considered the depravity of his contemporaries. He believed, like other Decadents, that only a return to wholesome medieval values and practices would restore the world to its intended path. The lithe adolescent physique also recalls Renaissance sculptures such as Donatello's *David* (1409, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence), admired at the time because it was produced during the Florentine Republic (also referenced in Rodin's *Gates of Hell*). Artists since the Nazarenes had regarded fifteenth-century Florence the pinnacle of Western civilization because painters, sculptors, and architects collaborated to create beautiful environments that facilitated and were nurtured by Florence's quasi-democratic government. The Parisian journal *La Renaissance*, published from 1872 to 1875, attested to the interest in this period. Fascination with the Florentine Republic escalated after the Franco-Prussian War because a democratic Republic replaced Napoleon III's Second Empire. For Minne and others, the freedom, equality, and happiness associated with a democratic form of government went hand-in-hand with an aesthetically pleasing milieu.

Minne accommodated popular demand for his sculpture by producing *Kneeling Youth* in various sizes and materials, including bronze, marble, and granite. The idea of repeating a single form for *Fountain of Kneeling Youths* could have come either from medieval tomb sculpture or from Rodin, who recycled body parts in his *Burgbers of Calais*. Still, Minne's emaciated figures differ from the robust bodies of Rodin. Each artist chose forms appropriate to his ideas. For Minne it was contemplation, spirituality, and withdrawal, whereas for Rodin it was action, conflict, and engagement.

WOMEN: ANGELS OR WHORES?

It is clear from the prevalence of evil women in literature and painting toward the end of the nineteenth century that fear, misunderstanding, and hatred of women was widespread. Science and custom constructed women as inferior to men, and this influenced how society functioned. Schopenhauer's 1851 essay "On Women" asserted: "women exist in the main solely for the propagation of the species" and as a result "the only business that really claims their earnest attention is love, making conquests, and everything connected with this—dress, dancing, and so on" (Schopenhauer 1908: 112, 107).

Problems arose when bourgeois women became dissatisfied with restriction of their roles to that of wife and mother and with other limitations imposed by a male-dominated world. Aggravating this situation was the belief that women were the opposite of men: emotional, filthy (due to menstruation), amoral, and frail, while men were intellectual, rational, clean, strong, and disciplined. Biological research suggested that women were more germ-infested than men, claiming that they operated as transmitters of venereal disease and of fatal illnesses, such as tuberculosis and cholera, to their unborn children. Within this illogical world view, it was appropriate for men to control women.

This pessimistic attitude is reflected in *The Evil Mothers* (1894, Figure 13.12) by the Swiss artist Giovanni Segantini (1858–99), whose biography contrasts dramatically with Khnopff's. Orphaned at age eight, Segantini supported himself in a variety of jobs and took art classes in Milan beginning in 1875. In 1883, he signed a contract with the art dealer Vittore Grubicy agreeing to give him all his paintings in exchange for a salary; in 1886 it was modified to include a percentage of sales profits, and in 1891 it was annulled because Segantini was by then very successful.

Here, in a barren landscape, three women swathed in black cloth are mysteriously bound by their flowing hair to a sterile, leafless tree, whose twisted forms seem to symbolize their sin and torment. This frozen, manless world holds no hope for salvation. Insufficient visual clues leave the painting's meaning open to interpretation; neither the artist nor contemporary critics wrote enough about it to indicate its specific significance. Why are the mothers evil? How did they harm or neglect their children? Circumstantial evidence provides some guidance in forming at least a general idea of the painting's content. During the 1890s one child in ten died in infancy, and one in seven died of tuberculosis in childhood. Since mothers had primary responsibility



Figure 13.12
Giovanni Segantini, *The Evil Mothers*, 1894. Oil on canvas, 105 × 200 cm (3 ft 5¼ in × 6 ft 6⅝ in). Belvedere Museum, Vienna.

for their children, any misfortune befalling them was considered the mother's fault. Segantini's evil mothers could be suffering for offenses as serious as child abuse or communicating tuberculosis, or as innocuous as not breastfeeding, which had recently been proven successful as a means of raising healthier children. Segantini began painting in a realistic Academic style, but switched to a kind of Neoimpressionist style in the 1880s, reflecting his shift from descriptive paintings to ones conveying ideas.

IMAGINATION OUT OF CONTROL

The Swiss painter Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918) addressed the fear of women, darkness, and death. This is understandable, since his parents and five siblings died, one by one, over a period of years, from tuberculosis. He apprenticed to a specialist in tourist landscapes and studied at Geneva's École des Beaux-Arts from 1873 to 1878. During the 1880s, Hodler became less interested in representing appearances in a realistic way than in expressing ideas, as in fellow Swiss painter Henrich Fuseli's *Nightmare* (Figure 4.3). In *Night* (1889–90, Figure 13.13) a frightened man lying naked amongst a group sleeping out-of-doors recoils at the sight of a black-cowled figure crouching over his genitals. His face expresses the terror of someone startled out of, or into, a nightmare. This is a self-portrait, suggesting that the image can be read autobiographically. While narrative ambiguity opens the painting to various interpretations, the apparent eroticism so disturbed Swiss authorities that the mayor of Geneva had the painting removed from a public exhibition. Hodler constructed his paintings according to a unique color theory. Just as Wagner intended particular sounds to evoke particular ideas, Hodler, like Runge (Figure 4.6), believed that colors conveyed specific associations. According to Hodler, "White usually means purity, black represents evil or suffering. A vibrant red expresses violence, a pale blue softness, purple sadness" (Selz 1972: 122). The Symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud relied on a similar synaesthetic method to create enigmatic poems such as "'The Sun has Wept Rose,'" written around 1870:

*The sun has wept rose in the shell of your ears,
The world has rolled white from your back, your thighs;
The sea has stained rust the crimson of your breasts,
And Man has bled black at your sovereign side.*

(Rimbaud 2000: 140)

Figure 13.13
Ferdinand Hodler, *Night*,
1889–90. Oil on canvas, 116 x
299 cm (3 ft 9 in x 9 ft 9 in).
Kunstmuseum, Bern.



Hodler also developed a theory based on comparative biology to explain the inherent harmony and meaning of the universe. This theory, Parallelism, asserted that order in nature is demonstrated by symmetry and the repetition of forms and colors. More importantly, Parallelism confirmed the existence of moral order in the universe. Parallelism resembles the concept of correspondences, elaborated by Charles Baudelaire in his poem “Correspondences,” published in the poetry collection *The Flowers of Evil* (1857), which had a tremendous impact on the Symbolists.



Read Hodler's description of *Night* in a letter to a friend at www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

*Nature is a temple in which living pillars
Sometimes emit confused words;
Man crosses it through forests of symbols
That observe him with familiar glances.
Like long echoes that mingle in the distance
In a profound tenebrous unity,
Vast as the night and vast as light,
Perfumes, sounds, and colors respond to one another.*

(Baudelaire 1976: 32)

Here, Baudelaire described nature as an animate entity whose forms represent ideas and which is intelligent and capable of self-expression. Even immaterial qualities such as sound and color react to one another in an imaginary world where the fantastic is possible. Baudelaire admired Wagner, and in his 8 April 1861 review of a *Tannhäuser* performance in Paris, Baudelaire wrote:

what would be surprising would be to find that sound could *not* suggest color, that colors could *not* evoke the idea of a melody, and that sound and color were unsuitable for the translation of ideas; things have always been expressed by reciprocal analogy ever since God brought forth the world as a complex and indivisible totality.

(Baudelaire 1861: 206)

Baudelaire suggested here that the process of the creative artist is analogous to divine creation, thus establishing for the artist a privileged position.

VIRGIN MOTHERS

While decadent women and malevolent mothers epitomized the Decadent conception of women, the virtuous virgin characterized the Idealist vision. “*Blessed Art Thou Among Women*” (c. 1900, Figure 13.14) by Gertrude Käsebier (1852–1934) takes its title from the words spoken by the archangel Gabriel when he announced to the Virgin Mary that she would give birth to the Messiah. The girl, whose mysterious purity is enhanced by her solemn, wide-eyed expression and prim attire, stands literally on the threshold between protective domesticity and the public sphere. The adult, whose averted gaze, coiffed hair, and radiant white gown make her seem the literal embodiment of the household angel nineteenth-century men hoped their wives to be, places a protective hand on the girl’s shoulder, as if gently launching her into a new life beyond the confines of home. In contrast to Segantini’s evil mothers clad in black, Käsebier depicts the virtuous mother dressed in white, an emblem of the purity of the ideal mother–child relationship. The composition is static and the moment



Figure 13.14

Gertrude Käsebier, "Blessed Art Thou Among Women," c. 1900. Photogravure, 24 × 14 cm (9½ × 5½ in). Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, NH.

seems frozen in time, which was one of the goals of the Photo-Secession, to which Käsebier belonged. This American organization, formed in 1902, was committed to Pictorialist photography, as was its British counterpart, The Linked Ring. It favored prints developed with platinum as an additive, because trace amounts of that metal produce subtle and rich tones. The effect, utilized here by Käsebier, creates an emotive mood consistent with Symbolist taste. Käsebier's career began late—a mother of three in an unhappy marriage, Käsebier began studying at the Pratt Institute of Art and Design in 1889 and became a professional photographer in 1895 for financial reasons. She exhibited at the Boston Camera Club in 1896, opened a portrait studio on Fifth Avenue in 1898, and co-founded the Photo-Secession in 1902.

SOCIAL PESSIMISM

Käsebier's allusion to religion indicates that, despite society becoming increasingly secularized, religion continued to play an important role even at the end of the nineteenth century. Still, secularization and changing social and political circumstances affected the ways in which artists treated religious subjects. This emerges in Käsebier's photograph, which comments on the status of women via religion, and in the Belgian artist James Ensor's painting *The Entry of Christ into Brussels in 1889* (1888, Figure 13.15), which satirizes contemporary society. Ensor (1860–1949) received a traditional training at the art academy located in his hometown of Ostend and at the Brussels Academy



Figure 13.15

James Ensor, *The Entry of Christ into Brussels in 1889*, 1888. Oil on canvas, 253 × 431 cm (8 ft 3½ in × 14 ft 1¼ in). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

of Fine Arts. In the early 1880s, he worked in an Impressionist style—contemporary subjects and loose brushwork. That Ensor worked in the progressive, anti-Academic style of the moment signaled his interest in exploring new ideas. His experimentation moved steadily towards a rawer, more expressive style with brighter colors and coarser brushwork. Ensor, a lifelong bachelor, had his studio above the souvenir shop run by his mother and his aunt. He was financially dependent on them, a situation that was personally oppressive but allowed him the freedom to pursue his art.

Although Ensor had numerous one-man exhibitions beginning in the 1890s, *The Entry of Christ into Brussels in 1889* was never publicly exhibited during his lifetime, and remained in the artist's possession until his death in 1949 (like Girodet's *Endymion*, Figure 2.12). Its large (8 × 14 feet, 2.5 × 4.3 meters) scale and subject suggest Ensor intended to exhibit it; why he never did remains a mystery. Here, Ensor imagined an absurd event: the second coming of Christ during pre-Lenten Mardi Gras festivities in Brussels; the title alludes to the biblical entry of Christ into Jerusalem. Ensor viewed the contemporary world as a carnival farce filled with cruelty and stupidity. This chaotic Mardi Gras parade parodies the traditional festive entry, a solemn, orderly occasion celebrating the political sovereignty of a ruler over the town he is entering, a ritual discussed earlier in connection with Pforr's *Entry of Emperor Rudolf* (Figure 4.21) and Krafft's *Triumphal Entry of Franz I* (Figure 7.9).

Contemporary viewers would have associated such a scene not only with the annual Mardi Gras festivities but also with the violent labor unrest plaguing Belgium in the mid-1880s. In this raucous mob of masked faces, Jesus neither figures prominently nor is recognized by the revelers, yet on the podium is a banner proclaiming “Long Live Jesus, King of Brussels” (“*Vive Jesus Roi de Bruxelles*”). Just as Josephson identified with the water sprite as a persecuted and misunderstood figure, so Ensor identified with Christ. This is evident from Ensor's numerous self-portraits as Christ, included in this painting. Ensor also made unflattering caricatures of well-known Belgians that would have been considered scandalous at the time. Caricature typically occurred in small-scale images and in popular print media intended for the amusement of the masses, but Ensor transgressed this norm by including them in a large-scale oil painting. Ensor employed masks in a way that is both modernist and Symbolist because they convey meaning on several different levels. In addition to critiquing



For additional information emerging from *The Entry of Christ's* technical examination go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

Underdrawing

Drawing on a surface intended as a guide for the painter. It is eventually concealed by paint.

Infrared reflectography

A technique used to examine layers of painting and drawing beneath a painting's surface. Infrared rays penetrate beneath a painting's surface to reveal underdrawing and changes made by an artist while working. Photographs can be made using this technique.

public figures, they are appropriate to the Mardi Gras theme. They function as a metaphor for the false public facade individuals assume to conceal their inner selves. *The Entry of Christ*'s composition seems spontaneous and chaotic, but **underdrawing** on the canvas revealed by **infrared reflectography** and x-ray indicate that Ensor carefully designed the scene. He chose bright, intense colors because he associated them with freedom and honesty, an opinion he shared with Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin, and which was a key component of the Expressionist movement developing after 1900. The fantastic, enigmatic, and individualistic character of this painting qualify it as Symbolist, and its misanthropic vision of humanity ally it with pessimism and Decadence.

MEMORY AND DEGENERATION

Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863–1944) was the quintessential Decadent. Working often in isolation, his life was marked by tragedy and psychological and emotional suffering. Like Khnopff and Moreau, Munch remained a bachelor, and had a series of failed love affairs that converted him to a life of celibate creativity. Munch created an ambitious *Gesamtkunstwerk* called “The Frieze of Life,” in which he sought to picture all aspects of human existence. He received a traditional education at the Royal School of Art and Design in Oslo, but his teacher, Christian Krohg (Figure 9.13), had visited Paris in 1882 and brought back ideas inspired by the Impressionists. At the annual Autumn Exhibition in Oslo in 1884, Munch saw paintings by Gauguin, whose brother-in-law (their wives were sisters) was the Norwegian Impressionist Frits Thaulow (1847–1906).

In 1886, Munch produced the work he described as “a breakthrough in my art. Most of what I later did was born in this painting” (Eggum 1980: 198). *The Sick Child* (Figure 13.16) was inspired by memories of the death of his beloved sister Sophie

Figure 13.16

Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child*, 1886. Oil on canvas, 24 × 29 cm (9½ × 11½ in). The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.



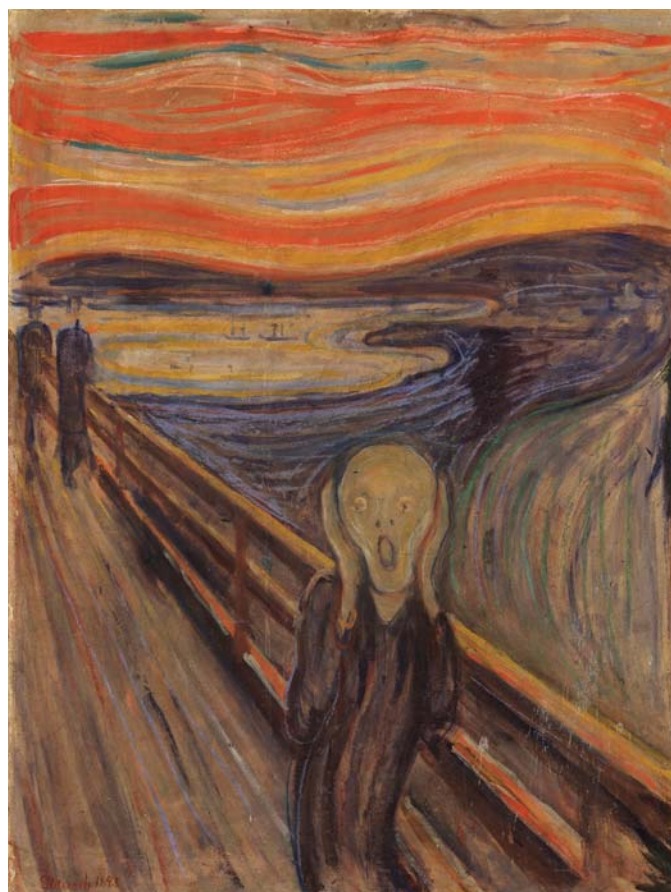
from tuberculosis in 1877, when Munch was 13. Although Nobel prize-winner Robert Koch isolated the highly contagious bacillus in 1882, it took decades before successful treatments were found. Thus Munch's father, a physician, was unable to prevent either the death of Sophie, or of Munch's mother, who died of the disease a decade earlier. Like Josephson's *Water Sprite*, Munch intended *The Sick Child* as an accurate psychological record of his helplessness and guilt (Munch also almost died from tuberculosis as a child), created with the help of models. Although conforming to Naturalism by painting an event he saw and experienced as truthfully as possible, Munch's dissatisfaction with the result led to a work more Symbolist in character. Munch worked obsessively on the painting for more than a year, repeatedly scratching out, repainting, and scratching out again. The result is a scene experienced at close range but hazily, as if viewed through tears or the veil of memory. The artist's intense emotion emerges in the grid of scratchings, which contrasts with the pallor and vacant stare of the dying child. She seems as resigned to her fate as her sorrowful aunt, whose head is bowed, perhaps in prayer. Their hands melt together in an abstract patch suggesting the emotional and biological connectedness of family. Munch intensified the mood of sickness and decay by using the complementary colors green and red. Red is particularly appropriate, since one of the symptoms of tuberculosis is coughing up blood.

Exhibited at Christiania's (Oslo's name until 1925) 1886 Autumn Exhibition, *The Sick Child* was condemned by critics and colleagues because of its innovative technique, which in addition to scratching with gouges, included applying paint with rags and a palette knife, and pouring thinned green paint over the surface. Munch's technical experimentation was typically Symbolist, but ahead of its time in 1885. Critics also accused Munch of an inability to control design, render detail, and paint coherently. This rejection and a lack of support from family and friends led him to embrace the more accepted progressive trends of Naturalism and Impressionism from 1886 until the early 1890s, when he met artists in Paris and Berlin grappling with issues similar to those explored in *The Sick Child*. This affirmation encouraged Munch to return to the trajectory he had abandoned in 1886, and to evolve a highly personal, Symbolist style. Munch exhibited with the Association of Berlin Artists in 1892, but his works caused such a scandal that the organizing committee closed the show within a week. In protest, 45 German artists resigned from the Association and formed the Free Association of Berlin Artists. The "Munch Affair" made the artist, condemned by the *Frankfurter Zeitung* critic as a "Nordic dauber and poisoner of art," an overnight sensation (Heller 1984: 101).

Having already produced works entitled *Melancholy* and *Jealousy* for "The Frieze of Life," Munch added *Despair*, now known as *The Scream*, in 1893 (Figure 13.17). He intended it as a visual equivalent for feelings of schizophrenic anxiety experienced while walking intoxicated over a bridge in the Oslo fjord one summer evening. On a stripe in the blood-red sky, Munch inscribed the words "Can only have been painted by someone gone mad," a radical gesture incorporating descriptive text into a painted image. *The Scream* operates on multiple levels: an autobiographical record, associations evoked in the viewer, and a symbol of universal ideas such as love, death, and despair. In addition to suggesting ideas, Munch adopted an experimental technique: he painted on cardboard in a mixture of oils, pastels, and casein, a rarely used, sticky, milk-based substance. Here, as in Géricault's *Wounded Cuirassier* (Figure 3.10), nature sympathetically reflects the state of mind of the human subject. *The Scream* was, then as now, a symbol of psychic anxiety caused by the pressures of the modern world.

Figure 13.17

Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1893. Oil, tempera, and pastel on cardboard, 91 × 74 cm (35½ × 29 in). The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo.



GAUGUIN: SEEKING BUT NEVER FINDING

Like Ensor, Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) also identified with Christ because he felt himself to be misunderstood and his message unappreciated. Following a mid-life crisis in which he abandoned his career as a stockbroker and his wife and five children for art, Gauguin embarked on a lifelong quest for a life of peace and harmony, which he sought first among the peasants of Pont Aven, Brittany, and later among the natives of Polynesia. The ultimate tragedy of Gauguin was that he never found what he was looking for. As soon as he became familiar with a culture, Gauguin recognized that it suffered from the same problems troubling the Parisian society he had fled—fear, jealousy, anger, and deceit. He died of syphilis in a tropical paradise in 1903. Gauguin began as an amateur painter, and studied with Camille Pissarro at Académie Colarossi. He exhibited a landscape at the 1876 Salon, and began painting full time in 1885. At the last Impressionist Exhibition (1886), Gauguin exhibited 20 works, mostly landscapes, which received mixed reviews.

“What I want most of all is to flee Paris, which is a desert for a poor man. My name as an artist becomes greater every day but meanwhile I sometimes go three days without eating, which destroys not only my health but my energy,” he wrote to his wife, Mette Gad, in 1887 (Gauguin 1984: 147). In the summer of 1886, Gauguin moved to Pont Aven, where life was less expensive, the air cleaner, the streets less crowded, the inhabitants unpretentious. *The Vision after the Sermon: Jacob Wrestling with*



Figure 13.18
Paul Gauguin, *The Vision After the Sermon: Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, 1888.
Oil on canvas, 73 × 92 cm
(28 × 36 in). National Gallery
of Scotland, Edinburgh.

the Angel (1888, Figure 13.18) conveys the spirituality, social harmony, and rootedness in tradition and nature that Gauguin initially experienced in Brittany. In a letter to van Gogh, Gauguin wrote:

I think I have achieved great simplicity in the figures; very rustic, very superstitious ... For me in this painting the landscape and the fight only exist in the imagination of the people praying after the sermon, which is why there is a contrast between the people, who are natural, and the struggle going on in a landscape which is non-natural and out of proportion.

(Wildenstein 1964: 90–91)

Gauguin transformed experience into symbol. He painted *Vision* shortly after witnessing the Pardon of St Nicodemus, an annual event that Christianized a local Celtic pagan ritual (cow sacrifice for fertility purposes). It involved a church service and a blessing of the cows, and was held in a chapel near an apple orchard and a field of buckwheat that appeared reddish late in the day.

In the foreground, Breton women dressed in native costume (accompanied on the right by Gauguin, tonsured as a monk) envision the sermon they have just heard. Their imaginations bring the story alive in their collective unconscious: Jacob (father of the sons who founded the ten tribes of Israel) encounters and wrestles with a divine stranger (Genesis 32:22–31). These Breton women symbolize an ideal harmony with their community and environment. Gauguin signaled to viewers that this image represented an idea more than an actual scene by deviating from naturalistic description—he distorted color (red field), form (mask-like simplification of faces), and composition (flattening and compression of foreground and background). A branch separates the actual, earthly realm of people and cow from the imaginary/spiritual realm of the vision.

Gauguin found inspiration for his approach in Japanese prints and medieval stained glass. Japanese prints began arriving in Western Europe in large numbers beginning in 1853, when the West reestablished relations with Japan. The large areas of unmodulated color, collapsing of near and far, and black outlines typical of Japanese prints appealed to Western artists looking for new approaches. The stained glass windows of medieval French churches offered a similar schematic style with strong color areas surrounded by thick outline. Some artists were attracted to them because they offered a native source of inspiration especially appealing because of the association of the Middle Ages with an idealized era of spirituality and social harmony.

In the fall of 1889, Gauguin moved to the coastal town of Le Pouldu because he felt Pont Aven was being ruined by tourism, and its natives corrupted by big city ways. He discovered that the situation in Le Pouldu was similar, so in 1891 Gauguin departed for Tahiti.

I am leaving in order to have peace and quiet, to be rid of the influence of civilization. I only want to do simple, very simple art, and to be able to do that, I have to immerse myself in virgin nature, see no one but savages, live their life, with no other thought in mind but to render, the way a child would, the concepts formed in my brain...

(Huret 1891: 50)

After a long sea journey, Gauguin found Tahiti's capital Papeete dirty, ugly, and dangerous, its streets populated with prostitutes and opportunists, all fallout from France's colonial occupation. He settled in a remote part of the island hoping to escape the ills of modern civilization.

In paintings intended for the Parisian market, Gauguin represented Tahiti as an Edenic paradise inhabited by happy natives possessing spirituality comparable to Christian saints. The lush setting, spiritual yet receptive women, and abundant food embodied a modern fantasy in tropical guise, a formula adapted from Orientalism. That Tahiti was not the paradise Gauguin had envisioned emerges in *Where do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* (1897–98, Figure 13.19). The size of this work indicates Gauguin's ambition: 1.4 × 3.7 meters (approximately 4' 6" × 12'). Before he attempted suicide (unsuccessfully with arsenic), Gauguin wanted to complete one grand work as a final testament. Gauguin claimed he executed *Where*

Figure 13.19

Paul Gauguin, *Where do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?*, 1897–98. Oil on canvas, 139.1 × 374.6 cm (4 ft 6 in × 12 ft 3 in). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



do We Come From? in a burst of creativity without making preparatory sketches—but a preparatory sketch does exist, with a squared overlay, indicating that he transferred the design to a larger surface (1898, Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens, Paris). This encourages skepticism about Gauguin’s seriousness about attempting suicide, for which there are various explanations, including publicity.

Consistent with Gauguin’s syncretistic ideas, *Where do We Come From?* contains elements from diverse traditions—a Peruvian mummy, façade figures from the Indonesian temple of Borobudur—to which Gauguin had access through photographs and postcards he brought to Polynesia. He rejected the traditional left to right method of reading images and composed *Where Do We Come From?* from right to left, like Chinese or Hebrew. The tripartite format calls to mind triptych altarpieces in Renaissance and Baroque churches, which, along with the scale, indicates the importance of this work for Gauguin.

The three major figure groups illustrate the questions posed in the title. The three women with a child represent the beginning of life; the central group symbolizes the daily existence of young adulthood; and in the final group, according to the artist, “an old woman approaching death appears reconciled and resigned to her thoughts.” The “strange white bird ... represents the futility of words.” (Shackelford 2004: 180) Despite Gauguin’s clarification, the painting’s meaning remains mysterious; it suggests rather than narrates. Gauguin’s enigmatic composition encourages viewers to wonder about the scene’s meaning and to ponder metaphysical questions. Gauguin’s belief that there are no fixed meanings is both Symbolist and modernist, as is his inducement to viewer engagement. As in his other works, Gauguin distorts and simplifies colors and forms for expressive purposes, indicating that the image is not a simple narrative. In addition, Gauguin here, as elsewhere, paints on a non-traditional burlap surface, whose coarse texture becomes an integral part of the visual experience and makes the viewer cognizant that what (s)he sees is a two-dimensional object. This emphasis on the material and technique of painting, and on the work of art as object are conceptual steps on the road to abstraction.

VAN GOGH: EXPRESSING NATURE

Gauguin spent the fall of 1888 in Arles with van Gogh, in a now-infamous sojourn that culminated in van Gogh’s cutting (not severing) his earlobe in a fit of anger or frustration. Van Gogh’s brother Theo convinced Gauguin to spend time with van Gogh in the south of France because he thought it would be good for his brother’s self-esteem. The domineering Gauguin bullied van Gogh much of the time and destroyed the Dutch artist’s dream of establishing an artists’ colony in warm and picturesque Provence when he abandoned van Gogh there in December 1888. Although the works of both artists convey emotion through the distortion of color and line and hint at spirituality beneath the surface of appearances, their approaches differed. Gauguin’s subjects were more imaginative, carefully composed, and generally painted indoors, whereas van Gogh’s subjects came from the visible world, were spontaneously recorded (from heart to canvas rather than from mind to canvas), and he often worked outdoors, like the Impressionists. Gauguin used nature to suggest metaphysical truths whereas van Gogh hoped to reveal divinity in nature, an aspiration connecting him to the Protestant pantheistic tradition.

Figure 13.20

Vincent van Gogh, *Terrace in the Luxembourg Garden*, 1886. Oil on canvas, 26 × 46 cm (10¼ × 18⅜ in). Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA.



In 1886, van Gogh quit his career as an art dealer and moved to Paris to paint full time. There, he briefly embraced the Impressionist fascination with light, color, and modernity before developing his signature, more emotionally engaged, style. In *Terrace in the Luxembourg Garden* (1886, Figure 13.20) van Gogh described a spring day in a Parisian park with the detachment of a *flâneur*. His thick, visible brushstrokes hint at his evolving personal approach, but the physical and psychological distance to the objects represented typifies the Impressionist outlook. Van Gogh soon personalized this technique for expressive purposes. In works like *Starry Night* (1889, Figure 13.21) bright colors and thick, aggressive brushstrokes communicate a vital energy that on the one hand might embody the artist's inner energy and on the other, the divine energy permeating the universe. Each brush stroke has an individual integrity, and color and line depart from description toward expression, the independent expressive power of line and color, whose possibilities were explored by Expressionist artists after 1900.

Figure 13.21

Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 73 × 92 cm (28 × 36 in). Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Van Gogh painted *Starry Night* from his window in the St-Remy mental hospital near Arles, where he was convalescing from a mental breakdown. He simplified and exaggerated color and form in order to communicate his idealistic message about the interconnectedness of creation and the profound emotional experience stirred in him by nature. Van Gogh chose a viewpoint that placed the church near the center, suggesting its centrality in village social and spiritual life. The spiky form of the cypress tree echoes the steeple and, along with the dramatic sky, represents nature, the other source of van Gogh's inspiration.

Van Gogh's technique reinforced his ideas: an intense feeling of connectedness to nature. The thick, staccato dashes of paint serve several purposes. They suggest the artist's inner tension, function as electrical pulses unifying all matter in this pictorial universe, and draw attention to the canvas as a two-dimensional decorative surface. While the band of white clouds hugging the ridge is a common phenomenon in the mountains, the size and yellow color of the stars and their bizarre halos mark a shift from perception to imagination, as does the swirling band (perhaps the Milky Way?) animating the night sky. Although van Gogh's paintings were always anchored in observation, the step toward abstraction, to color and line fulfilling independent, non-representational roles, is a small one.

GENIUS AND CREATIVITY

The artist as a creative, if tormented, genius was a common Symbolist theme, and is the subject of the Polish painter Jacek Malczewski's *Melancholia* (1894, Figure 13.22). Malczewski studied with Jan Matejko (Figure 14.13) at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow and attended the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris (1876–77). Malczewski frequently exhibited abroad, including at the Paris Exposition universelle of 1900, and pondered philosophical and metaphysical questions, including the role of the artist in society, Polish political independence, and the meaning of life and death, all of which emerge in *Melancholia*. Within the confines of the artist's studio, a procession magically emerges from the painting within a painting: children, armed to fight for Polish independence, preceded by adults and, in the right foreground, elderly men dressed in the grey overcoats of the freedom fighters of 1865, who were subsequently exiled



Figure 13.22
Jacek Malczewski,
Melancholia, 1894. Oil on
canvas, 139.5 × 240 cm
(4 ft 6¾ in × 7 ft 10½ in).
The National Museum in
Poznan.

to Siberia. In the right foreground sits an old man representing Saturn, whose empty hourglass and flag of mourning suggest both the hopelessness of the Polish national struggle, and the melancholy realization that time devours all things. Compared to Goya's savage Saturn (Figure 4.11), Malczewski's is tired and resigned. In the central section fighters appear in costumes indicating participation in the failed insurrections of 1795, 1830, and 1863.

The personal nature of this vision is indicated by a self-portrait. Malczewski's vision is the pictured image, a thought-bubble device utilized by Rodin, whose Dante presides over the materialization of his vision on the *Gates of Hell*. Typical of Decadent Symbolist works, Malczewski's pessimistic vision operates on several different levels. It is a parable of the stages of human life, of the tragic history of the Polish nation, of human civilization, and of the role of the artist in society. The inevitable decline of civilization was convincingly argued by Max Nordau in *Degeneration* and was supported by statistics such as France's declining birth rate. At the same time as Malczewski's painting evidenced pessimism, it also honored individuals' capacity to define their own realities and artists' ability to control the exact form and content of their artworks.

Odilon Redon, praised by des Esseintes as "a mad and morbid genius," was also a Decadent. *The Marsh Flower: A Head Sad & Human* (1885, Figure 13.23) is a lithograph made by Redon as part of a series entitled *Homage to Goya*. The six lithographs in this series were inspired by Goya's *Los Capricos*, whose theme was human beings' irrational mistreatment of one another, a manifestation of Goya's

Figure 13.23

Odilon Redon, *The Marsh Flower: A Head Sad & Human*, 1885. Lithograph on chine appliqué, 27 × 20 cm (10¾ × 8 in.). Museum of Modern Art, New York.



pessimism. Here, as in many of Redon's prints, a vague but unmistakable melancholy dominates. Redon wrote:

I have created a few fantasies based on the stem of a flower, or a human face ... that I believe are drawn, constructed, and built as they had to be. They are what they are because they are organically cohesive ... My whole originality therefore consists in making the most implausible beings live human lives according to the laws of the plausible, placing the logic of the visible, insofar as is possible, at the service of the invisible.

(Dorra 1995: 56)

The Marsh Flower is a paradigmatic Symbolist work: its source is the artist's imagination and designed according to the artist's intuition rather than rules. Typical of Symbolism, Redon reduced his composition and palette to essentials. Redon preferred to work only in black and white (he rarely used color until after 1900) because he felt it best suited the representation of the invisible. Color created associations with the visible world for most viewers, and it was an unseen world that Redon represented. Further justification for this approach could be found in ancient alchemical theories, according to which the universe in its original state of chaos was black (space) and white (stars). Appropriately, Redon's subjects often seem imaginatively related to primitive early stages of the universe's development.

Symbolist uncertainty emerges in *Marsh Flower* in subject and composition. The marsh flower emerges from a spatially ambiguous void and the creature is an impossible hybrid of plant and human. Redon read avidly about recent discoveries in natural science, which revealed in fossil finds and comparative zoology the existence of bizarre creatures such as mammals that looked and behaved like fish (whales), and worms that were hermaphroditic. Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) demonstrated that many such hybrid species had become extinct over time because they were ill-suited to compete for food and other necessities for survival. Redon's images evoke those found in science fiction writing, the first example of which was Jules Verne's *2000 Leagues Under the Sea* (first published in French in 1871), a mysterious world populated by fantastic creatures. Redon's picturing of strange beings produced by his imagination anticipated Surrealist artists who, beginning in the 1920s, depicted the irrational world of the human unconscious.

BEYOND THE FIVE SENSES

Writings by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, especially *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871, translated almost immediately into French), encouraged belief in the existence of entities invisible to the naked eye. Nietzsche's proclamation that "The essence of nature is now to be expressed symbolically" appealed to Symbolists (Nietzsche 1967: 40). But what symbols should one use to convey this essence? Myth was once vehicle, as we saw in the cases of Wagner, Puvis de Chavannes, Böcklin, and Josephson; exaggeration of color and form was another possibility resorted to by Moreau, Redon, Ensor, Klimt, and Munch; and the rendering of a mysterious mood prompting viewer contemplation was yet another strategy, pursued by Khnopff, Segantini, and Hodler.

Some responded to pessimistic analyses of the state of human affairs by asserting that universal truths lay hidden beneath the flux of appearances. The fact

that recent advances in science proved the existence of forces normally undetectable by the five senses seemed to confirm the assertion of earlier mystics and philosophers such as Emmanuel Swedenborg, whose belief in the coexistence of a parallel, unseen world had influenced William Blake, Baudelaire, and Hodler. The discovery of cholera- and tuberculosis-producing microbes in the 1870s and 1880s furnished further evidence for the reality of unseen worlds. Jean-Martin Charcot's experiments (Chapter 4) drew attention to the existence of the human unconscious. To citizens of the late nineteenth century, even the possibility of contacting friends and family beyond the grave seemed plausible in the light of recent scientific discoveries. Hypnotized female mediums (generally hypnotized by men) established contact with spirits in the beyond for gullible audiences. Evidence for the unconscious as rational was provided by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), in which he explained how dreams symbolically express real, if suppressed, human experiences and feelings.

CONCLUSION

Symbolists sought to express personal ideas and universal truths. While united in their rejection of Naturalism and disillusioned with the contemporary world, Symbolists divided into two camps depending on whether they were optimistic or pessimistic about the future of humanity: Idealists and Decadents. Idealists, inspired by Puvis and Böcklin, often expressed nostalgic longing for an imagined past where people were healthy and happy and society was harmonious. They felt that by heeding the lessons of the past and listening to their hearts instead of being guided by materialistic interests, humanity could return to the holistic, harmonious, and egalitarian condition that existed in an imagined Golden Age or the Middle Ages. Decadents manifested a pessimistic world view grounded in the philosophies of Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Nietzsche. To them, humans were inherently corrupt, selfish, and petty, causing the inevitable destruction of civilization. Symbolist themes include the nature of women (virgin or whore), the existence of a hidden reality beyond sense perception, the artist's role in society, the meaning of life, and the relationship between divinity and human creativity. Symbolist emphasis on the human imagination led them to reject Naturalism and to adopt technical and compositional strategies suited to the ideas they intended to communicate. Symbolists experimented with non-traditional materials and techniques, including pastel, drawing, and lithography. Partly as a rejection of Naturalism and partly in an effort to work honestly, Symbolists demonstrated the artificiality of art in a variety of ways. These included: unconventional settings, expressive colors, revealing technique through applying paint very thinly or very thickly, and emphasizing the two-dimensionality of painting through the use of flat, graphic forms. These experiments were harbingers of things to come. The twentieth-century movements of Expressionism, abstraction, and Surrealism all have roots in Symbolism.



For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter and to see where van Gogh lived in Paris go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.

Individualism and Collectivism

While few artists probably longed for the old days of steady employment by the Roman Catholic Church and political rulers, with their restrictive thematic and stylistic parameters, emancipation from age-old patronage systems posed enormous challenges to nineteenth-century artists. There were three aspects to this liberation: economic, social, and ideological. Civic art associations, galleries, and exhibiting cooperatives arose in response to increased demand for art by the middle classes and facilitated contact between artists and new patrons. Although essential, new financial opportunities did not address the need for peer contact and camaraderie lost by artists operating outside the academic system. This social and ideological deficiency was reconstituted by artists in various ways—from artists' collectives like the Nazarenes, to informal, yet regular, meetings at cafés and each others' studios. Contact with other artists was important for psychological, creative, and economic reasons. First of all, most people have an inherent need to communicate with others who understand what it is they do. Second, the exchange of ideas stimulates the creative process. Exposure to new influences and dialogue with colleagues unleashes a chain of thought processes, akin to introducing a new substance that generates a chemical reaction. And third, it was through personal contacts that artists usually made the connections necessary to show their work in galleries and exhibitions. The solitary artist was often the failed artist in the new world of commerce.

It was not only through colonies and organizations that artists created meaningful places for themselves in a changing world. Artists also played an integral role in the project of national identity formation. Initiated in the early 1800s as a result of Napoleonic imperialism, efforts to formulate generic national identities escalated throughout the nineteenth century, not only in nations striving for political independence (Finland, Hungary, Norway, Poland) or in nations working towards unification (Germany, Italy), but in sovereign nation-states (England, France, Russia, Sweden, United States) and those recently unified and independent (Belgium, Greece, Serbia). In the invention of national identity, artists collaborated closely with bureaucrats, ethnologists, historians, musicians, and writers in an enterprise whose political and civic importance paralleled that of earlier generations of artists responsible for visualizing the doctrines of church and state. Because it is impossible to consider

all instances of national identity formation in Europe, countries have been selected as representative of these three types. Germany represents unifying nations because it had a much stronger sense of self-identity and produced a more cohesive array of nationalist imagery than either Belgium or Italy. Poland and Hungary represent nations striving for independence because they had the largest populations and among the largest emigrant communities in Anglophone countries. Russia, the largest European nation in terms of population and area, represents the sovereign nations.

ARTISTS' COLONIES

While rural artists' colonies began forming as early as the 1820s (notably in Barbizon), it was in the last three decades of the nineteenth century when they proliferated throughout Europe and the US—in the 1880s, more than 30 new colonies were established. The demand for rural motifs by urban audiences, combined with artists' urge to economize and to concentrate on their art in a milieu remote from city distractions, gradually enticed thousands of artists to visit or settle in quaint villages from St Ives in England to Abramtsevo in Russia (established by railroad tycoon Savva Mamontov). Many artists' colonies, such as the one in Giverny, France where Monet settled in the 1890s, were founded by artist-tourists in search of inspiring rural motifs. In a pattern repeated elsewhere, visiting (American) painters stayed on at Giverny, and word of the pleasant environment spread quickly, drawing first other artists (who either visited or settled), then tourists. This in turn generated an infrastructure of hotels, restaurants, shops, galleries, and entertainment that catered to these “colonists,” transforming forever the “unspoiled” character that initially attracted them.

The images of these rural places conveyed in pictures and words by artist-outsiders created identities for these locales that were accepted as accurate by urban middle-class audiences. Artists depicted selective views of a place and its inhabitants that often reflected nostalgia for an imagined or remembered past. In many cases they were inspired by happy childhood memories. In contrast to the utopian visions of artists who visualized the possibility of a better life in the future, the pictures of artist-colonists frequently located a better life in a past incompatible with modernity. This attitude derived more from the personal experiences and needs of artists, who found in the camaraderie and casualness of artist-colony life an ideal recreation of a kind of sociability lacking in the cities. In no instance did this attitude result from an actual continuity of contemporary village life with the prehistoric past. However, because artist-colonists were either unaware of, or purposely ignored, the changes that had taken place in rural society it was easy for them and their urban audiences to imagine such continuity. Their ignorance made it easy to accept the descriptions of artists and writers as ethnographic documents, despite the fact (as in the case of Leibl, Figure 10.14) that the incidents, people, and views portrayed were chosen to correspond to a pre-conceived notion of nature and rusticity.

PONT AVEN

In 1866, American artists awaiting acceptance at the École des Beaux-Arts spent the summer working in the Brittany village of Pont Aven. Some stayed, attracting first American and British colleagues, then French and Scandinavian artists. Pont Aven's enterprising natives seized this economic opportunity, posing willingly in their quaint

Sunday costumes, and taking artists in as boarders. By the 1870s, Brittany was France's most popular artist destination. While agriculture had mechanized in Brittany, artists omitted this detail from their paintings, just as Constable had when depicting his native Suffolk (Figure 5.9). Still, Brittany was predominantly agricultural until the twentieth century, giving it a relatively unspoiled character appealing to those seeking escape from modern urban life; Gauguin proclaimed Pont Aven a refuge from the moral and physical corruption of Paris. Just as train service facilitated easy access to jobs in more industrialized areas for poverty-stricken Bretons, it made accessible a depopulated and charming cultural Breton setting for tourists and artist-colonists. The distinctness of the Breton language (related to Celtic) and the presence of ancient Druidic ruins dotting the landscape enhanced the exotic and timeless quality of the region.

By the time Gauguin arrived there in 1886, more than 100 artists were working in Pont Aven. They dined together at one of the village's three hotels, and met regularly in the evening for games, dances, or musical performances. In an 1889 letter to Bernard, Gauguin asserted that in Brittany "I find a savage, primitive quality," oversimplifying the situation in a village that thrived on commerce with tourists and artist-colonists (Gauguin 1978: 23). At the same time, it exemplified a city person's desire to experience a life rooted in the pre-industrial past, a past imaginable as part of his own heritage. Gauguin lived in Pont Aven in 1886, 1888–90, and again in 1894 before returning to Tahiti. His "documentation" of the collective vision of Pont Aven women in *Vision After the Sermon* (Figure 13.18) was, more than anything else, a projection of the artist's own desire for a naïve and mysterious relationship to the world—an impossibility made clear by William Blake in *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* (Chapter 4). Harried nineteenth-century urbanites craved a return to this uncomplicated and interdependent state of being, a condition that could not be achieved in reality. Striving for such an unattainable condition characterized a new and modern outlook, one that, because of its impossibility, was fundamentally tragic. Pessimistic Symbolists believed this reunification could only occur in the imagination, while optimistic Symbolists envisioned strategies for attaining it in reality.

From 1888 to 1890, Gauguin attracted to the village a group of young artists who became known as the School of Pont Aven. They worked in a group style developed collaboratively by Gauguin and Émile Bernard (1868–1941) which Gauguin called Synthetism, because it wove together a variety of disparate influences into an aesthetic whole. Bernard was the son of a wealthy businessman, and studied at Atelier Cormon in Paris, where he met Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. While on a walking tour of Brittany in 1886, Bernard encountered Gauguin at Pont Aven, establishing a relationship that had important consequences for both artists. When Bernard returned to Pont Aven in summer 1888, he and Gauguin shared ideas, which resulted in closely related works, including Bernard's *Breton Women in the Meadow* (Figure 14.1) and Gauguin's *Vision after the Sermon*. In contrast to Boudin's *Beach at Trouville* (Figure 12.14), where the natives appear in the distance as foils to the foreground activities of tourists, here, costumed Breton peasant women occupy center stage. Their starched shawls and flamboyant headgear contrast with the fashionably dressed women with their parasols discretely observing in the distance, seated, as if enjoying a rustic theatrical performance. And they probably were. Bernard, like Gauguin, depicted a Pardon, a unique tradition among Breton Catholics staged with increasing frequency for tourists. Villagers dressed in their best attire and participated in processions and church services during the day-long event.



Figure 14.1

Émile Bernard, *Breton Women in the Meadow*, 1888. Oil on canvas, 74 × 92 cm (29 × 36 in). Private Collection.

In *Breton Women*, signs of difference abound. Bernard emphasized the disparity between urbanites and peasants by placing two girls side by side—a properly dressed bourgeois child reminiscent of Degas’s *Lepic daughters* (Figure 12.4) and a girl in local costume. The heavy-set woman behind them contrasts with the svelte figures of the city women, and the mask-like, asymmetrically deformed faces of the Bretons affirm the modernity and normalcy of the tourists, intimating that they occupy a higher rung on the evolutionary ladder than the picturesque natives. At the same time, Bernard carefully recorded subtle stylistic differences in Breton female headgear, differences which signified a woman’s status—virgin, married, widowed, etc. Bernard cropped figures with an apparent casualness familiar from Degas, suggesting that his view represented a modern, urban way of seeing.

This picturesque vision of Brittany was cultivated in the second half of the nineteenth century by artists and writers who promoted Bretons as refreshing examples of peasants untainted by modernity. Indeed, many tourists experienced the journey from city to village as a journey through time as well as space. Breton women appear in paintings far more frequently than Breton men and epitomized a domesticated, benign, and maternally nurturing milieu. This replaced the earlier image of Breton peasants as vermin-ridden, ignorant, and violent defenders of the Bourbon monarchy, an image that emerged during the 1790s and was customarily represented by wild, powerful, long-haired Breton men. No actual shift in the attitudes or beliefs of Bretons occurred, just a new interpretation of them, one harmonizing with fantasies and desires of artist-colonists and tourists.

Pont Aven School artists were inspired by Japanese and French folk prints, enamelwork, and stained-glass windows. Motivated by a desire to develop a visual language untainted by academic influences, Pont Aven artists looked to non-Western art, popular culture, and crafts for inspiration. The Middle Ages (with which enamelwork and stained glass were associated) conjured up visions in the nineteenth-century

imagination of happy collective labor and uncomplicated spirituality, conditions that had concrete economic, political, and social associations that were anti-capitalist, anti-monarchist, and anti-hierarchical. The absence of normative spatial relationships in Japanese and folk prints suggested a child-like honesty and naiveté that many perceived as a possible antidote for a selfish and immoral modern society. Bernard developed an approach in 1887 that drastically simplified forms, presenting them as flat areas of color surrounded by thick black contours. His paintings in this style appeared at a joint exhibition with Toulouse-Lautrec and van Gogh at the Grand Restaurant-Bouillon on the Boulevard de Clichy in November 1887. The critic Édouard Dujardin called this new style **Cloisonism** because of its resemblance to the cloisonné enamel technique (Dujardin 1888: 487–92).

Bernard's friend Paul Sérusier (1864–1927) was also the son of a wealthy businessman and financially independent. He studied at the Académie Julian from 1885 to 1890, and won an honorable mention at the 1888 Salon with a painting of a Breton weaver (Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie, Senlis). That fall, during a visit to Pont Aven, Sérusier painted his best known work, *Landscape in the Bois d'Amour: The Talisman* (Figure 14.2). Upon his arrival, Sérusier sought out Gauguin, who advised him: "How do you see that tree? Green? Use green then, the most beautiful green on your palette;—and that shadow, rather blue? Don't be afraid to paint as blue as possible" (Boyle-Turner 1985: 193). In October 1888, armed with Gauguin's advice, Sérusier went to the Bois d'Amour, a nearby forest popular with artists, and began painting a landscape on a small board. He followed Gauguin's instructions, focusing not on objects or spatial relationships, but on colors, which he exaggerated in accordance

Cloisonism

A style of Postimpressionist painting that arose in Paris during the 1880s. It is characterized by clearly delineated forms and unmodulated areas of color. The term was coined by art critic Édouard Dujardin in 1888.

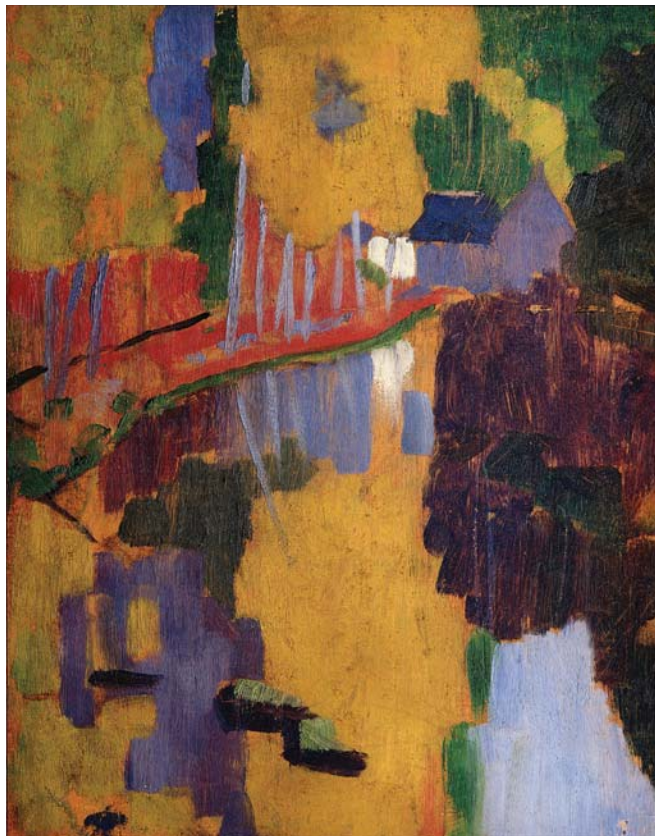


Figure 14.2

Paul Sérusier, *Landscape in the Bois d'Amour: The Talisman*, 1888. Oil on board, 27 × 22 cm (10 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

with his inner aesthetic sense. Although Sérusier intended to complete it later, he never did because it became a touchstone of inspiration in its unfinished state. He used it to demonstrate Synthetist principles to fellow students at the Académie Julian, including Maurice Denis (1870–1943), Paul Ranson (1864–1909), and Édouard Vuillard (1868–1940). Sérusier moved to Pont Aven, but often visited Paris, where he helped found the artists' group the Nabis in 1889.

At the 1889 Exposition universelle, Pont Aven artists (nine, including Gauguin and Bernard) exhibited 93 works at the Café Volpini, situated on the fairgrounds. Wall coverings ordered by the proprietor were not going to arrive on time, so Bernard convinced him to display paintings instead. All artists visiting the Exposition visited the infamous alternative Volpini exhibition. It exerted a major influence on a younger generation that included Denis, Vuillard, and Sérusier.

WORPSWEDE

Just as the Pont Aven School established its reputation through the Café Volpini exhibition, Worpswede artists attracted positive critical attention at their 1895 exhibitions at Bremen's art museum and the annual Glaspalast exhibition in Munich (Chapter 11), establishing a group identity that evolved into the Worpswede Artists' Association in 1897. The choice of Worpswede for an artists' colony was significant in light of recent historical events. In 1864 Prussia and Denmark fought over the provinces of Schleswig and Holstein, where Worpswede is located. Worpswede artists, by highlighting aspects of architecture, people, and landscape that fulfilled preexisting ideas of Germanness, established for Worpswede and its inhabitants a German (as opposed to Danish) identity.

Fritz Mackensen (1866–1953) studied art at the academies in Düsseldorf and Munich. He “discovered” the village of Worpswede in 1884, when he spent the summer working there. Mackensen returned in 1886 and 1887, and, in 1889, was joined by fellow students Otto Modersohn (1865–1943) and Hans am Ende (1864–1918). When he first visited Worpswede with Mackensen in July 1889, Modersohn expressed a typical tourist's delight with the village in his diary entry:

I saw almost immediately that my expectations were not disappointed.
I found a completely unique village that made a completely unfamiliar
impression on me—the sandy village streets, the big straw roofs, and on
every side as far as one could see, an expanse as great as the sea.

(*Worpswede* 1986: 15)

Modersohn and his colleagues experienced a feeling of timelessness: Worpswede seemed little changed over the centuries with rituals of daily life preserving continuity with the past. This, however, was not the case. The area was settled in the eighteenth century under the initiative of the Elector of Hannover, who had canals built to facilitate commerce on the peat-rich moors, and flanked them with birch trees functioning as windbreaks, timber, and soil anchors. Ignoring much of the village's architecture, modern occupations, and the densely built town center enabled Mackensen and his Worpswede colleagues to create a mythic, Germanic identity for Worpswede that made it attractive to artists and tourists alike.

The naturalist technique of Worpswede artists, with its careful attention to the nuances of light and atmosphere, was connected in the art discourse of the day to

France and to Barbizon artists, whose work Modersohn first encountered at Munich's Glaspalast Exhibition in 1888. By adopting Naturalism, Worpswede artists established an anti-academic and anti-establishment stance. They asserted independence and modernity in a context in which Realism, of the sort practiced by Anton von Werner (Figure 11.18), represented the academic standard. Realism was endorsed as *the* German style by Emperor Wilhelm I because of its sources in the art of Albrecht Dürer and Hans Holbein.

The simplicity and spirituality associated with Worpswede's inhabitants emerged in Mackensen's *Nursing Child* or *Woman on the Peat Barrow*, now known as *Mother and Child*, "*Moor Madonna*" (1892, Figure 14.3). Here, a mother sits on a wheelbarrow on the peat bog, nursing her child. In her anonymity, Moor Madonna represented all peasant mothers, and all peasant mothers, in turn, Mackensen suggests, embody the maternal tenderness and wisdom of Mary, mother of Jesus. Mackensen made spirituality explicit through title and figural arrangement, which poet Rainer Maria Rilke recognized when he referred to this painting as a "Protestant devotional image" (*Worpswede* 1986: 75). Mackensen ennobled this peasant woman through a compositional strategy learned from studying Millet: a low viewpoint monumentalizing the figure against the sky. *Moor Madonna* came to symbolize not just the noble peasant, but the noble *German* peasant, whose ethics, values, and even physique were biomystically rooted in the landscape. According to the German cultural historian Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (*Land and People*, 1854) the northern landscape produced



Figure 14.3
Fritz Mackensen, *Mother and Child*, "*Moor Madonna*," 1892.
Oil on canvas, 180 × 140 cm
(5 ft 11 in × 4 ft 7 in).
Kunsthalle, Bremen.

hard-working, resilient, and resourceful inhabitants, suited to survival in a barren and inhospitable environment.

SKAGEN

In contrast to Pont Aven and Worpswede, Skagen was a fishing village, situated on the northernmost tip of Denmark. Artists and writers had sporadically visited Skagen since the 1830s—Hans Christian Andersen even wrote a story about it (“Tale of the Dunes,” 1859). Unlike Worpswede, it was a poet, Holger Drachman (who also painted), and an art historian, Karl Madsen (later director of Denmark’s national gallery), who initiated the migration of artist-colonists beginning in the early 1870s. First students from the Copenhagen Academy came, then other Norwegian and Danish artists and writers, including Christian Krohg (Figure 9.13) and Frits Thaulow. Until 1890, the nearest railway station was 15 miles (22 km) away, making Skagen desirably remote, yet accessible. When the railroad came to Skagen, the town’s population of 2,000 quadrupled during the summers; significantly, these temporary residents rarely appear in the paintings of Skagen artists. Life in Skagen centered around Brøndum’s Hotel, where many artists stayed and regularly dined. A permanent colony formed in 1880, when Madsen and two artists—Viggo Johansen (1851–1935) and Michael Ancher (1849–1927)—married Brøndum girls. Cultural luminaries and important art collectors from Copenhagen visited regularly, including art critic Georg Brandes and Heinrich Hirschsprung, whose collection in Copenhagen is now open to the public.

Peder Severin Krøyer (1851–1909), the best known Skagen painter, arrived in 1882, spending winters in Copenhagen and summers in Skagen. Krøyer studied at the Copenhagen Academy from 1864 to 1870 and participated in its exhibitions beginning in 1871. In 1877, he went to Paris, studying for two years with the academic painter Léon Bonnat and then spent two years in Italy. Italy continued to be an important destination for artists throughout the nineteenth century. Krøyer debuted at the Paris Salon in 1881, and won a medal with his painting of an Italian hat maker’s workshop. When Krøyer returned to Denmark in 1882, he established the independent Artists’ Study School, whose curriculum included studies of the nude, still forbidden at Copenhagen’s Royal Academy. While in Skagen, Krøyer concentrated on beach scenes, in which he tried to capture the special luminary qualities of this point on the European continent where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Baltic Sea. *Summer Day at the South Beach of Skagen* (1884, Figure 14.4) evidences Krøyer’s Impressionist interest in recording light and atmosphere. Here, he captured the subtle radiance of the northern latitudes, where summer days last 20 hours, a difference made clear in comparison to Eugène Boudin’s *Beach at Trouville* (Figure 12.14) or Claude Monet’s *Garden at Sainte-Adresse* (Figure 12.15). Still, Krøyer depicted an idyllic vision of Nordic summer, since it is more often than not chilly and rainy in the summertime. Hirschsprung purchased *Summer Day* following its exhibition at the 1887 Paris Salon.

Summer Day at the South Beach of Skagen exemplifies the masculinization of outdoor bathing at the end of the nineteenth century. Sea-bathing, with its cold water and waves, was considered particularly invigorating and virility-inducing. Here, Krøyer represented the separation of spheres by dividing his canvas diagonally into two near-equal portions, with boys frolicking in the water on one side, and on the other, a fully dressed girl patiently observing their activity with a posture that suggests her desire to join them. The contrast between passive and active, solitary and social, emphasizes the



Figure 14.4
Peder Severin Krøyer, *Summer Day at the South Beach of Skagen*, 1884. Oil on canvas, 155 × 213 cm (5 ft 1 in × 7 ft). The Hirschsprung Collection, Copenhagen.

dichotomy between male and female. Consistent with Impressionist theory, Krøyer depicted shadows in blue tonalities rather than black, as state-sponsored academies taught. His bold strokes of grayish-blue and green combined with the thickly applied foam of the wave to emphasize the artwork as a two-dimensional object. In both subject and technique, Krøyer exemplified modern artistic trends.

Anna Brøndum Ancher (1859–1935), daughter of the hotel owner and wife of Michael Ancher, studied at a drawing school for women in Copenhagen (1875–78). Unlike Krøyer, whose subjects and technique connected him to progressive continental trends, Anna Ancher was more of a social Realist concerned with rendering the life and people of her native Skagen. The scene of *A Funeral* (1888–91, Figure 14.5) is set in a home rather than the church, suggesting that the deceased was a “free church” member. Free churches emerged throughout northern Europe in the nineteenth century among those who felt that the state Lutheran Church had strayed from its original mission to respond to the needs of parishioners and had evolved instead into an oppressive religious arm of the government.

In *A Funeral* the widow stands beside the preacher behind the wreath-decorated casket that doubles as an altar. Somber mourners listen attentively to the service—viewers must imagine the additional dimension of sound. Ancher established a contemplative atmosphere through muted tonalities of a limited palette of blue-black, green, and rose. The simple and sparsely furnished room, with a window along the left wall, invites comparison with the interiors of seventeenth-century Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer (1632–75). Ancher separated the viewer from the villagers; we seem to stand opposite the preacher and behind the mourners, emphasizing the viewer’s status as an outside observer rather than a community member. Like Rosa Bonheur’s *Horse Fair* (Figure 11.5), Ancher’s *Funeral* was purchased by the state following its first exhibition.

Despite differences in subject and style, Ancher and Krøyer focused on the singular character of Danes and their landscape. This had been a topic of discussion in Danish cultural circles since 1878, when paintings presented in Denmark’s art section at that year’s Exposition universelle were criticized for their slick execution and lack



Figure 14.5
 Anna Ancher, *A Funeral*,
 1888–91. Oil on canvas,
 45 × 55 cm (17¾ × 21⅝ in.).
 Statens Museum, Denmark.

of an identifiable national style. In other words, Danish art was dismissed as deceitful because of its generic composition, style, and subject matter, mainly consistent with academic principles derived from Golden Age artists such as Købke (Figure 7.11). To gain respect in an international arena, young Danish artists grappled with the dilemma of how to be both modern and Danish. Should they stay home to avoid being tainted by foreign influences, or would this lead to embarrassingly provincial artworks? If they stayed home, how would they keep up with the latest trends emerging in Paris, the epicenter of the art world in the late nineteenth century? How could an artist produce works that were progressive and reflective of individual and national identities? These questions assumed increasing urgency for all artists during a period of intensifying competition among nations at international exhibitions, increasing globalization that threatened ethnic and cultural identities, and escalating pressure from ethnic groups striving for political independence. Economic and social forces favoring homogenization and egalitarianism came into conflict with the psychological need for continuity and security.

ARTIST ORGANIZATIONS

Artists' needs have remained constant over the centuries: a place to learn about material, style, and technique; a market for artworks; a community of peers with whom to exchange ideas. As long as a stable hierarchy of church and state patronage existed, these needs were satisfactorily met for most artists. As the authority of the church-state hierarchy eroded, artists were liberated from the shackles of servitude and able to shape their destinies with unprecedented freedom. The heterogeneous backgrounds and tastes of potential buyers meant that artists could pursue their own interests with an ever-improving likelihood of finding customers. The artists with the greatest freedom were financially independent and wealthy (like Constable and Manet) or had loyal patrons (like Canova and Turner).

One big advantage to the new state of affairs was a broad selection of teachers with diverse philosophies and values. At the same time, this new freedom had a price. Official exhibitions often excluded innovative works or works by artists trained outside state academies, and the built-in collegiality of the academic system needed to be replaced by something created by artists themselves. Thus, artists' colonies and associations multiplied during the nineteenth century. Some, like the Nazarenes and the Pre-Raphaelites, were motivated by ideological concerns; others, like the Impressionists, were stimulated by economic concerns. Still others, like Barbizon, Pont Aven, and Worpswede artists, were attracted by the desire to work in a particular geographical location.

SOCIETY OF INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

Odilon Redon, Georges Seurat, and Paul Signac (1863–1935) founded the Society of Independent Artists (*Société des Artistes Indépendants*) in 1884 for artists frustrated by the exclusionary practices of the Salon as well as of invitation-only exhibiting groups like the Impressionists. The Society sponsored an annual, jury-free exhibition (*Salon des Indépendants*), successfully attracting prominent artists and critical and public attention. Its size and diversity meant that the Society functioned more as an exhibiting organization than as a social club for like-minded artists.

THE NABIS

Many artists longed for community and camaraderie at the end of the nineteenth century. Sérusier expressed this feeling in a letter to Denis: “I dream of a purified brotherhood consisting solely of artist-believers, lovers of beauty and goodness, exhibiting in their works and their characters an indefinable quality that I translate as Nabi” (Sérusier 1950: 40–41). The Nabi was a secret society of Symbolist artists organized by disgruntled students from the Académie Julian, including Denis, Ranson, and Sérusier. It formed by spring 1889 (lasting until about 1900). At the outset, the group held meetings at L’Os à Moelle (The Marrow Bone) café near the Académie Julian, but by 1890 it assembled on Saturdays at Ranson’s studio at 25 Boulevard du Montparnasse. The Nabis shared not only ideals; from 1890 to 1892 Sérusier, Denis, and Édouard Vuillard shared a studio. The Nabis were united by interests in Synthetism, philosophy, Symbolism, and technical experimentation. They tested unconventional supports such as cardboard and fabric, and decorated lampshades, wallpaper, and screens, evidence of their anti-academic, non-hierarchical outlook. Convinced of art’s potential to change attitudes and eventually society, the Nabis energetically pursued contacts with critics, publishers, theater directors, and dealers, and exhibited widely. They showed at the *Salon des Indépendants* and their own group show, *The Salon of Impressionists and Symbolists*, a name chosen for marketing purposes. By naming the two best-known, progressive art movements, *The Salon* suggested that it represented a diverse range of the most modern artistic trends. Actually it was an invitation-only exhibition that included a select group of artists; Camille Pissarro exhibited there once, and the final exhibition was essentially his one-man show, since most of the Nabis had by then moved on.

The first *Salon of Impressionists and Symbolists* occurred in December 1891 at the Paris gallery of the Nabis’s promoter, Le Barc de Boutteville. But exhibiting

art was a minor aspect of the Nabi enterprise. The Nabís wanted to integrate art and everyday life and did not agree with traditional hierarchical notions about the superiority of painting and sculpture to other creative endeavors. As a result, the Nabís collaborated on a wide range of projects, including set designs, costumes, programs, and posters for Théâtre de l’Oeuvre (Theater of the Work, run by Denis’s childhood friend Aurélien Lugné-Poe), stained-glass windows by Louis Comfort Tiffany, and limited-edition colored lithographs for art dealer Ambroise Vollard.

The 1895 production of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen’s *The Master Builder* (1892) at Théâtre de l’Oeuvre exemplified Nabís aspirations. The play tells the story of architect/craftsman Halvard Solness, who abandons church construction following the death of his young family in a fire, and turns to building “homes for human beings. Cozy, comfortable, bright homes, where father and mother and the whole troop of children can live in safety and gladness, feeling what a happy thing it is to be alive in the world—and most of all to belong to each other...” (Ibsen 1907: 273). The Nabi enterprise was promoted in articles published in widely read periodicals such as *Echo de Paris* and *Mercure de France*. Aware of the influence exercised by the press, the Nabís founded the journal *La Revue blanche* in 1891 as a platform for their ideas.

As Symbolists, the Nabís rejected academic principles and privileged the expression of ideas. Although their styles and individual beliefs varied (Denis was a devout Catholic, while Ranson was a Theosophist; some worked in a Synthetist mode while others preferred Neoimpressionism), all sought to express the life force in a heartfelt manner. For them, the life force embodied the unknowable yet fundamental essence of all life. The Nabi also believed in the existence of a universal aesthetic sense expressive of a naïve and interdependent relationship with the world, a relationship eroded by civilization and progress. According to the Nabís, this aesthetic sense emerged most clearly in so-called “primitive” art produced by non-Western cultures as well as by Europeans up to the early Renaissance. This art, they maintained, operated on an intuitive, spiritual level, distilling metaphysical concepts and presenting them in visual form. Their assumption was based on a creative misunderstanding of artworks produced by temporally or geographically remote cultures. Like artist-colonists, the Nabís interpreted unfamiliar cultures in a manner corresponding to their needs, rather than to a desire to understand artworks in the context of the time and place in which they were produced.

The Nabi considered themselves prophets of a new world view that would realign humanity on the path to happiness and fulfillment; indeed, the name Nabi means “prophets” in Hebrew, a name suggested by their friend, Henry Cazalis, a Hebrew scholar. The Nabi considered Gauguin their leader (despite his residence in the South Pacific), a role he gladly assumed. These young artists embraced Gauguin’s advice to distance themselves from narrative and objects, and to concentrate instead on patterns of colors, a method intended to capture more basic and essential aspects of the world. The theoretically oriented Sérusier spent his life organizing and articulating Nabís principles, which he published as *The ABC of Painting* in 1921. Because they reversed the usual priority of subject first, form second, the Nabi considered themselves more progressive than Naturalist, Realist, Impressionist, and Postimpressionist artists, all of whom thought first about their subject. In a two-part article published in August 1890 issues of *Art et Critique*, Maurice Denis (1870–1943) summarized the Nabi goal in a statement that came to be understood as the

group's manifesto: "Remember that a painting, before being a battle horse, a nude woman, or an anecdote, is essentially a flat surface, covered with colors assembled in a particular order" (Denis 1912: 1). Denis reminded readers in words, just as Manet, Degas, Monet, and others had done in paint, that a painting resulted from a series of decisions on the part of the artist about where and how to apply paint to a flat surface. The presence of recognizable objects in the painting was merely a by-product of the artist's decision-making process. Twenty years later, artists like Vassily Kandinsky (1866–1944), František Kupka (1871–1957), Kazimir Malevich (1878–1935), and Piet Mondrian (1872–1944) resisted the urge to represent recognizable objects altogether, and non-representational (abstract) art was born.

Ranson turned for inspiration to Edouard Schuré's *Grand Initiates* (1889) in works like *Christ and Buddha* (1890, Figure 14.6). *Grand Initiates* was a foundational work of theosophy, a religious philosophy that echoed William Blake's belief that "all religions are one." With chapters dedicated to key religious leaders such as Christ, Confucius, Buddha, and Mohammad, Schuré argued that prophets preached similar messages, and that understanding this was the starting point for dissolving the mistrust among cultures and for dismantling the barriers of ignorance and fear that divided humanity. Theosophy represented an extension into theology of democratic, egalitarian ideals and was the product of a more scientific approach to the comparative study of religions.

In a palette reduced to the three primary colors—blue, red, and yellow—and utilizing the Symbolist strategy of suggestion, Ranson tried to convey this harmonious



Figure 14.6

Paul Ranson, *Christ and Buddha*, 1890. Oil on canvas, 67 × 51 cm (26¼ × 20¼ in). Private Collection.

relationship between East and West as exemplified through representative religions—Christianity and Buddhism. Flanking the crucified Christ are two groups: orderly rows of praying souls on the right who turn away from Christ and Buddha, and on the left a disorderly crowd of more inquisitive figures who look toward them. Those on the right are so thoroughly indoctrinated that they see no need to think for themselves about the deeper meaning of their religious beliefs, whereas the others turn their attention toward Christ and Buddha in a gesture of receptivity to new ideas. Prominence of lotus flowers (representing rebirth), indicate Ranson's optimistic spiritual message. In traditional representations, the saved are represented to the right of Christ and the damned to the left. Here, Ranson suggested that close-minded, unreflective piety led toward damnation, whereas open-minded spirituality led toward salvation.

Denis's gentler, more conventional attitude emerged in *The Fight Between Jacob and the Angel* (c. 1892, Figure 14.7), which looks more like a choreographed dance than a wrestling match. His choice of subject probably reflected Denis's desire to reinterpret a subject painted earlier by Delacroix (a fresco in the church of St Sulpice in Paris, 1855–61) and Gauguin (Figure 13.18) in order to establish his place in art history. Unlike Delacroix and Gauguin, who provided expansive settings for the drama, Denis focused on the two figures, who are distinguished only by a difference in hair color and the length of their blue gowns. The difference between human and divine is minimized, feminized. Contrast between warm (reds) and cool (blues, browns) colors suggest a moment of drama and conflict that contrasts with Denis's more monochromatic paintings depicting tranquil subjects. Denis's simplification

Figure 14.7
Maurice Denis, *The Fight Between Jacob and the Angel*,
c. 1892. Oil on canvas,
48 × 36 cm (19 × 14½ in).
Private Collection.



of color, form, and detail was consistent with Nabi values, as was his disregard for scale and perspective. Large blocks of roughly textured color and clearly outlined forms flatten the space, emphasize its two-dimensionality, and create an aesthetic effect that is simple and decorative. Denis suggested the imaginary character of this scene in composition, tonality, and technique: the carefully outlined color units create a decorative pattern that emphasized the artificiality of the painting-object and encouraged viewers to contemplate the spiritual significance of the wrestling match. *The Fight Between Jacob and the Angel* expressed Denis's effort to engage with the world in a primitive, intuitive, and spiritual manner consistent with his Nabism and Roman Catholic ideals.

ROSE + CROIX

The inspiration of the French writer Joséphin Péladan, the Salon of the Rose + Croix (rose and cross or Rosicrucian, a mystical cult originating in ancient Egypt that reemerged in the seventeenth century) was an international Symbolist exhibiting society established in 1892. Its goal was elitist and religious. Rule 5 of the Salon de la Rose + Croix stated: "The Order favors first the Catholic Ideal and Mysticism. After Legend, Myth, Allegory, the Dream, the Paraphrase of great poetry and finally all Lyricism, the Order prefers work which has a mural-like character, as being of superior essence" (Pincus-Witten 1976: 212). To uphold its narrow objective, works were selected by a committee devoted to Rose + Croix ideals; its extreme exclusivity contrasted with the liberalized tendencies of most exhibition societies established in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Any works tainted by Realism, Naturalism, or Impressionism were excluded because of their preoccupation with the everyday world. Instead, the six Salon of the Rose + Croix exhibitions (held between 1892 and 1897) included only works considered mysterious, allegorical, or religious. More than 200 artists participated, representing more than a dozen nationalities, despite their being invitation-only exhibitions. The Swiss artist Carlos Schwabe (1877–1926) designed the poster for the inaugural exhibition (Figure 14.8). Schwabe studied briefly at Geneva's Écoles des Arts Décoratifs before moving to Paris, where he worked as a wallpaper designer and associated with the Symbolists. In this theosophically influenced image, a woman in white leads her earth-focused companion up a stairway toward the divine light. A third woman mired in earthly materialism watches. As in Runge's *Morning* (Figure 4.6) a border filled with symbolic detail surrounds the central scene, conveying the mysterious and spiritual aspirations of this exhibition, which attracted 10,000 visitors on opening day.

LES XX

Formed in 1883 in Brussels by a group of 13 disgruntled Belgian artists, including Ensor and Khnopff, Les XX (whose membership swelled to 20 by the opening of its first exhibition in February 1884) promoted international contemporary art. Although Les XX professed no particular doctrine, inclusion in their annual exhibitions was also by invitation, with participants selected at the group's annual meeting. Impressionism, Neoimpressionism, and Symbolism were the favored styles. Differences of opinion, however, were frequent: in 1890, member Henry De Groux (1867–1930) resigned when van Gogh was invited to participate, and Ensor protested the inclusion of



Figure 14.8
Carlos Schwabe, *Salon des Rose et Croix*, 1892. Lithograph, 197 × 81 cm (6 ft 4¼ in × 32 in). Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, IN.

Whistler in 1886, asserting that “admitting Whistler to Les XX is to stride toward extinction. Having made this first mistake, we will not be able to stop there. We will then have to admit Rodin, Monet, Renoir, or even Puvis de Chavannes [or] Moreau ... Why admit foreigners?” (Pincus-Witten 1976: 34).

The lawyer Octave Maus was the secretary and de facto organizer of Les XX during its lifespan (1883–93), and then of Les XX’s successor, *La Libre Esthétique* (The Free Aesthetic). He was a Belgian nationalist like Ensor, but unlike him Maus felt that the best way to demonstrate Belgian superiority was not by restricting exhibitors to Belgian nationals, but exhibiting rising international stars. Denis, Gauguin, Hodler, Monet, Pissarro, Redon, Renoir, Rodin, Segantini, Seurat (*Grande Jatte* in 1887), Toulouse-Lautrec, van Gogh, and Whistler all exhibited with Les XX. But Maus’s ambition went further; he wanted to improve the Brussels public’s receptivity to new trends in art, literature, and music. To this end, Maus organized concerts and lectures. Writers such as Stéphane Mallarmé, Georges Rodenbach (author of the cult classic *Bruges-la-Morte*—Bruges the Dead), Paul Verlaine, and theosophist Édouard Schuré spoke at Les XX events, and works by composers Alexander Borodin and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky premiered at concerts organized by Maus.

Les XX exhibitions were initially held in the home of labor lawyer, culture critic, and poet Edmond Picard. Along with Les XX member Fernand Khnopff, Picard was an active member of the newly formed socialist Belgian Workers' Party (POB), and initiated projects for the benefit of the working classes, from cultural education to building a civic center (*Maison du Peuple*). The POB had an arts section which worked closely with Les XX and progressive Belgian artists committed to the goal of social equality. For Les XX artists, as for many progressive artists at the end of the nineteenth century, art seemed a viable vehicle for social change.

NATIONAL IDENTITY

Artists were deeply affected by reviews their works received at international exhibitions. These reviews increasingly addressed the perceived national qualities imbedded in a work's subject matter and technique. For instance, when French critics praised Erik Werenskiöld's *Peasant Funeral* (Figure 10.12) at the 1889 Exposition universelle for its Norwegianness and condemned Danish and Swedish painting for imitating French qualities, artists understandably started cultivating a recognizably national visual language. This project was often facilitated by a sojourn abroad; it was by experiencing life in a foreign land that artists became sensitized to the singularity of their native cultures. The demand for artists to produce honest works revealing their national origin was part of a larger urge to define national identity in all spheres—appearance, behavior, character, custom, geography, and language.

"National character may be regarded as the result of national history, or national history as the development of national character; either way we cannot fail to recognize the closest connection between the two. Now, of all the evidence that can be taken, and that we shall attempt to take in this course, of the actual origin of each nation and of the persistence of the original character, by far the most clear and decisive are the customs of common law. These customs spring out of the first movement of the race towards social and civilized life; although not recorded in books, they are the most ancient portion of its lore, but they are not the earliest monuments of its literature. They are indeed often not written at all until they are becoming obsolete, until the use of them is less absolutely necessary, and oral tradition in danger of dying out ... And as the more closely we trace the origins of the modern nations ... the more surely we come upon a few everywhere, and those common customs, I think we may fairly infer that these are nearly all that there is to know. The modes of proving guilt and innocence, the modes of transferring or holding land, the assemblies of the tribe for counsel, for judicial work, or for military expeditions: these are common to the race, and they involve almost all the law that is needed by races in the condition in which we first find them."

Source: William Stubbs, *Lectures on Early English History*, London: Longmans, Green, 1906, p. 202.

A sense of national belonging was encouraged in three main ways: history, landscape, and tradition. By painting historical subjects, artists taught viewers about their own national pasts. This created a vital link between present and past and between the individual and the national collective. Just as history painting created a sense of rootedness in time, landscape painting created a sense of rootedness in place. The belief that geography directly influenced character and climate was quite old, but was

expressed with increasing frequency beginning in the eighteenth century. The French philosopher Baron de Montesquieu observed: “If we travel toward the north, we meet people who have few vices, many virtues, and a great share of frankness and sincerity” (Montesquieu 1773: 330). In 1812 Friedrich Schlegel noted: “the essence of a nation’s character is found in its poetic sense, which is embedded in individual manners of thought and life” (Schlegel 1822: 283). The seismic demographic shifts of the nineteenth century intensified the emotional importance of place.

In developing imagery expressing national identity, writers and artists turned to landscape and peasants because they represented stability and continuity, and a wholesome interdependence between community and environment. Each nation or ethnic group had different reasons for formulating national identity, and various factors affected their choices of subject and style. Moreover, nations fell into three main categories: long-term sovereign nation-states, nation-states recently formed, and nations struggling for independence. Nation-states were primarily concerned with creating a national identity with which the diverse regions and peoples within its borders could identify. Nations aspiring for independence, on the other hand had a dual mission: to mobilize countrymen to fight for emancipation from foreign occupation and to create a distinct identity on the world stage. Newly formed or recently independent nation-states (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Serbia) similarly needed to formulate a generic national identity and to project a suitable image internationally. The variety within these categories is exemplified by six examples: France and Russia (sovereign), Serbia (recently independent) and Finland, Hungary, and Poland (aspiring). These can be compared to the situation in Germany (Chapter 11).

FRANCE: MONET’S CATHEDRALS

Courbet’s *Burial at Ornans* (Figure 10.2) manifested the long-standing tensions between Paris and the provinces, which thwarted acceptance of a generic French identity. This situation worsened. During the 1880s anxiety escalated in France due to several factors: fears about another revolution, a declining birthrate (half that of its neighbor-enemy Germany), and a relative decrease in industrial output, resulting in France’s dropping from second place (to England) to fourth (behind Germany and the US). Various explanations were offered for this decline. Some attributed it to genetic mutations caused by a degenerate lifestyle of overindulgence (mostly in Paris), while others pointed to divorce law reform (1884) and state-funded secondary education for women, which whetted women’s desire to break out of their gilded domestic cages and pursue careers outside the home. Others ascribed France’s decline to an unhealthy influx of foreign (non-Catholic, non-French) influence, a xenophobic attitude fostering a Roman Catholic revival (of which the Rose + Croix Salon was part) and culminating in the Dreyfus Affair (1894). Jewish army captain Alfred Dreyfus was unjustly accused of espionage for Germany by a conspiracy of anti-Semitic officers. Initially convicted and imprisoned based on perjured evidence, Dreyfus was acquitted in 1906, following the confession and suicide of a conspirator. The Dreyfus Affair divided the nation into two opposing camps—one ultra-nationalist and Catholic, the other progressive and secular—turning friends into enemies overnight.

Thus, when Monet decided to paint his Rouen Cathedral series (Figure 14.9), carried out in two three-month campaigns during the winters of 1892 and 1894, he did so during a period of tremendous national anxiety and uncertainty. Monet chose

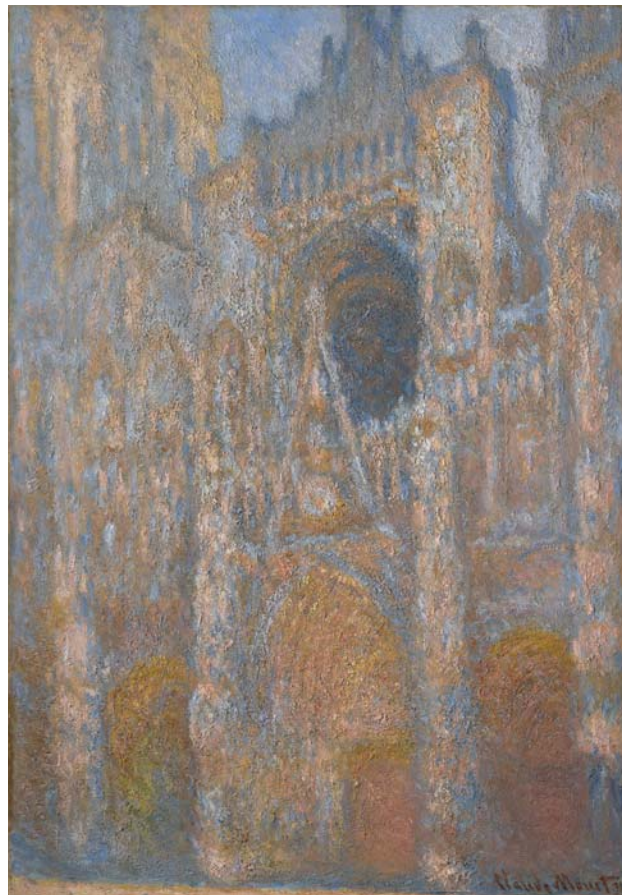


Figure 14.9
 Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral, Façade*, 1894. Oil on canvas, 106 × 74 cm (42 × 29 in). Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA.

Rouen Cathedral for pragmatic and strategic reasons. From a practical viewpoint, Rouen was relatively near Paris and Monet's home at Giverny, his brother lived there, and Rouen was a popular tourist destination. From a personal viewpoint, Monet had focused on landscape motifs during the previous decade—poplars along the Epte River, grainstacks near Giverny, needle rocks near Belle Isle in Brittany, Antibes on the Mediterranean coast, and the Creuse River valley—and he wanted to surprise critics with something other than landscape. Rouen and its cathedral reverberated with historical associations in the French imagination. It symbolized the past grandeur of France. The Gothic style, of which Rouen Cathedral is a textbook example, originated in France and spread throughout Europe; it also represented an ideal era of community and spirituality. More specifically, the national heroine Joan of Arc (Figure 10.4) was executed in Rouen in 1431, and Rouen Cathedral was where French kings were crowned during the Middle Ages.

From a rented space on the cathedral square, Monet worked on as many as eight canvases simultaneously. He applied paint in such a way that the building and the entire surface of the canvas appears in motion. Thick encrustations of paint suggest the façade's sculptural variety and delicate shades of color suggest particular times of day and weather conditions with the sensitivity of an artist attuned to the nuances of nature. By executing a cathedral series, Monet associated his Impressionist technique with all of France, its pulsating city life, bourgeois leisure, nature, and now culture/history. This demonstrated that Impressionism could convey stability and harmony

as well as Neoimpressionism, and suggested that individualism and patriotism were not mutually exclusive.

Monet exhibited 20 of the 30 Rouen Cathedral canvases at Durand-Ruel's gallery in 1895 at a solo exhibition that included 50 works. By the time the show closed, 11 of the cathedrals had been sold, and at prices higher than his previously sold paintings. Critical reviews were mixed. Some considered Monet's sensual treatment of the cathedral surface bordering on sacrilegious; Camille Mauclair wrote in *Mercury de France* that "Musical, Provençal [Provence is a warm, sunny region of southern French] colors placed onto this medieval structure with such insolence is the disturbing sign of a genius without a sense of the order of things ..." (Tucker 1990: 180). On the other hand, future French president Georges Clemenceau reviewed the show in an article entitled "Revolution of the Cathedrals" for *La Justice* and praised Monet's ability to "make the stones themselves live" (Tucker 1990: 180). These divergent responses reflected differing political positions. Mauclair objected to Monet's asymmetrical, partial presentation, pastel palette, and lack of detail, intimating that these visual qualities conveyed a message about France's incompleteness, irrationality, confusion, and instability. By distorting a national symbol, Mauclair suggested, Monet denounced the nation. Clemenceau, on the other hand, admired Monet's animation of architecture, endowing Rouen Cathedral with a vitality and monumentality expressing the relevance of French history to the present and invigorating the edifice with a life force linking it to nature and nation.

RUSSIA

Pogrom

Communal violence against a religious group, particularly Jews.

Russia was much larger and more ethnically diverse than France. Although ruled by the Romanov dynasty since 1612, the nineteenth century witnessed escalating unrest marked by **pogroms** against Jews in 1821 and 1881–84 and failed revolutions in 1825 and 1905. Unrest culminated in 1917 with a successful revolution and the execution of the royal family, a repeat in some respects of the pattern that unfolded in France more than a century earlier. Since at least the seventeenth century, nations in Central and Eastern Europe grappled with the dilemma of how to maintain their own "eastern" identities while being serious contenders in European power politics. Easternness or Orientalism, while having a certain exotic appeal to Westerners, was considered inferior. To gain acceptance, Easterners imitated the West. Russia adopted the Greek alphabet in the ninth century and Greek Orthodox religion a century later. Peter the Great moved the Russian capital from Moscow to St Petersburg in 1700, importing French and Italian architects to build it, and the Russian court spoke French (not Russian) and employed French chefs, dressmakers, and musicians. In the nineteenth century, Slavophilism, encouraged by Tsar Nicolas I, asserted that indigenous Russian culture was equally valid, although most Westerners did not agree. This opened debate concerning the appropriateness of imitating foreigners versus staying faithful to one's own culture, a debate that has yet to be resolved.

Vasily Surikov (1848–1916), a founding member of The Wanderers, came from a prominent Cossack family in Siberia, where he studied art before moving to St Petersburg in 1868 and enrolling in the academy there. In 1876, Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral commissioned Surikov to decorate its interior. While in Moscow, he conceived a trio of monumental paintings commemorating pivotal events in Russian history for which he became famous. These events were not great deeds of

famous Russians, but decisive and tragic incidents in the struggle between people and the state. The first of these, *The Morning of the Streltsi Execution* (1881, Figure 14.10), represents participants in a failed attempt to overthrow Peter the Great being taken to their place of execution in Moscow's Red Square in 1698. The Streltsi was a military corps established by Ivan the Terrible in the sixteenth century as imperial bodyguards. They objected to Peter's efforts to Westernize Russia by building a new capital in St Petersburg, on the eastern edge of the Baltic Sea, and the emperor feared they might attempt to assassinate him. The painting can be interpreted on several levels. Historically, it conveys a message about the consequences of disobedience to the ruler. Philosophically, it addresses authenticity (Russianness) versus masquerade (Westernness). Politically and economically it raises questions about national identity and internationalism. In the 1880s Russia, along with countries East and West, was trying to figure out how to maintain indigenous traditions and values when economic and political survival depended on successful international integration and modernization. Integration required conformity, but how much and in what areas were debated. Many objected to the imposition of foreign customs and practices, and there was disagreement about how much Russian practices and traditions could be compromised without losing self-respect and identity.

In *Streltsi Execution*, uniformed members of the Preobrazhensky regiment formed by Peter the Great in 1683 lead Streltsi to Red Square, nestled between the twin powers of church and state: St Basil's Church in the background and the Kremlin on the right. The gallows where some insurgents will hang (many were beheaded or tortured to death) appear in the right background, and in front of them, a stern-faced Peter the Great sits astride his steed, the conventions of equestrian portraiture signifying his superior status. To the right stands a nobleman clad in the French style, which Peter had recently ordered (all non-serfs were required to dress in French fashion); beside him stands Russian Orthodox patriarch Adrian. Both men quietly

Figure 14.10
Vasily Surikov, *The Morning of the Streltsi Execution*, 1881.
Oil on canvas, 218 × 379 cm
(7 ft 2 in × 12 ft 5 in).
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



contemplate the condemned Streltsi, each of whom holds a candle symbolizing the life about to be snuffed out. That the Streltsi knew the consequences of their actions does not mitigate the tragedy, and each experiences it in his own way—acceptance, anger, fear, and sorrow are all expressed in the faces and body language of the condemned, in a manner analogous to Rodin's *Burghers of Calais* (Figure 13.9). Like David's *Brutus* (Figure 2.9), Peter upholds the laws of the land regardless of the consequences; it is his responsibility as tsar. Mounted on his white steed, Peter conveys a resolve and determination analogous to David's *Napoleon* (Figure 3.5), ignoring the appeal for mercy of the nobleman who addresses him. In contrast, the thoughtful posture of the nobleman suggests that beneath his outward composure, he is saddened by Peter's law. The grieving and anxious family members and friends surrounding the condemned suggest the scale of this tragedy: individual, familial, and societal.

Surikov executed the painting according to standard academic procedures. He relied on historical documentation for authenticity, making numerous sketches of the setting, figures, objects, and dress, and relying on contemporary portraits for key actors such as Peter the Great. This lent credibility to his image, and encouraged viewers to accept Surikov's vision as an accurate recreation of an historical moment, a moment with direct relevance to contemporary Russia.

National epics became powerful agents in creating national identities. Tales of heroic deeds long ago provided material for exciting stories that represented continuity with an imagined past. The eleventh-century French *Song of Roland*, the thirteenth-century German *Nibelungenlied*, and the Finnish *Kalevala* were among the epics popularized in the nineteenth century to educate citizens about their origins and to provide them with a common heritage. In drawing on national epics, artists highlighted events establishing clear links to the past in such a way that present circumstances seemed a natural, if not preordained, consequence.

Viktor Vasnetsov (1848–1926) looked to the twelfth-century Russian epic *The History of Igor's Campaign* for his monumental painting *After Prince Igor's Battle with the Polovtsy* (1880, Figure 14.11). Here, Vastnetsov showed the outcome of the decisive

Figure 14.11

Viktor Vasnetsov, *After Prince Igor's Battle with the Polovtsy*, 1880. Oil on canvas, 205 × 390 cm (6 ft 2¾ in × 12 ft 9½ in). Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



battle between Russian troops and the Polovtsy tribe. The Polovtsy fought valiantly but unsuccessfully to defend their homeland, choosing death rather than subjugation. Two eagles—perhaps referring to the double-headed eagle symbolizing the Russian Empire—survey the battlefield at twilight, as a red sun (often a sign of good weather, but here evoking spilled blood) sinks beneath the horizon, signaling the twilight of the Polovtsy as well as of the day. The hallucinatory clarity of this vision of medieval carnage, in which beautiful maidens and strong warriors lie side by side, brings to life an event from the mythic past with the intensity of a waking dream. In contrast to Surikov, who fostered a sense of participation by situating the viewer at the same level as and in close proximity to the figures in the painting, Vasnetsov encouraged contemplation by presenting a tranquil moment in the aftermath of battle from an elevated perspective in a manner recalling Alexander Gardner's *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter* (Figure 8.7). These represented different strategies for achieving similar goals: awareness of national history, empathy with one's forebears, and an emotional attachment to place.

The Polovtsy represent indigenous peoples everywhere fighting in vain to defend their land, their language, and their customs against foreign influence. In a Russian context, the Polovtsy represented fundamental Russian qualities—bravery, strength, stubbornness. In Russia, as elsewhere, it was in the indigenous culture considered least transformed by outside influence (Brittany in France, the Highlands in Scotland, Dalarna in Sweden) that the true identity of the nation was believed to reside. In this expansive landscape of the Russian steppes, each blade of grass is described with a minute detail intended to awaken tactile memories of Russian nature in native viewers.

SERBIA

Vasnetsov's *Polovtsy* belongs to a category of nationalist narrative common outside of Western Europe: defeat as a rallying point for feelings of national community. The emphasis in these stories was not on defeat itself, but on the laudable behavior of the vanquished. This theme emerges frequently at the end of the nineteenth century in the art of Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania—those places struggling to rid themselves of foreign domination. Paja Jovanović's *Migration of the Serbs* (Figure 14.12) celebrated the Serbs' valiant failure to defend Christian Europe against Ottoman Turks in the seventeenth century. Jovanović (1859–1957) came from a region under Turkish control. In 1882 Jovanović won the Imperial Scholarship for his submission to the annual Academy exhibition, the culmination of seven years of study at the Vienna Academy. Two years later, Jovanović moved to Munich and, in 1889, to Paris. His popular ethnographic paintings were marketed by the Wallis and Tooth galleries in London, and circulated in engravings. *Migration of the Serbs* was commissioned by the Serbian Patriarch (leader of the Serbian Orthodox Christian Church) Georgije Branković for the 1896 Millennial Exhibition in Budapest, a world's fair celebrating 1,000 years since the establishment of the Hungarian Kingdom, which in 1896 was part of a dual monarchy with Austria.

Here, Jovanović showed Serbs migrating in 1690 from their ancestral villages in Kosovo to Hungarian territory in order to escape Ottoman reprisals. Prior to this, Serbian militias had responded to Austrian Emperor Leopold I's call for help to drive the Ottomans out of the Balkans. The effort was unsuccessful, initiating almost 200 years of



Figure 14.12

Paja Jovanović, *Migration of the Serbs*, 1896. Oil on canvas, 580 × 380 cm (19 ft × 25 ft 9 in). Patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Belgrade.

Ottoman occupation of Serbian territory. The exodus is led by Serbian Patriarch Arsenije III (a portrait of commissioning patriarch Branković) who prominently carries Leopold I's invitation to resettle in Austrian-controlled territory, a reward for Serbian loyalty and bravery. To his left, a soldier carries the flag of the Serbian Patriarchate, since religious leaders had replaced civic ones under Ottoman rule. Jovanović purposefully depicted a limited view of Serbian society on the march: warriors, priests, and landowners, but no peasants, women, or children. As a matter of national pride Branković wanted to avoid association with refugees victimized by circumstances beyond their control. Jovanović conveyed a sense of historic authenticity through ethnographically, although not historically, correct costume details: embroidered leather pants, woven leather *opanci* shoes with turned-up toes, and the shaggy sheepskin coat worn by Albanian Serbs. This image was engraved and familiar to all Serbs, reminding inhabitants of a recently reinstated sovereign Serbia (1878), as well as those continuing to live in exile abroad, of the glorious and tragic national past.



This image differs from Jovanović's original painting, which does have sheep and women, now in the museum in Pancevo, Serbia. To find out why, go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos

POLAND

In 1797, Poland, Europe's second largest country, ceased to exist. Over the course of 25 years, Austria, Prussia, and Russia took advantage of political instability and nibbled away at the Kingdom of Poland like hungry piranhas, adding to their own territories until the 800-year-old country disappeared from the map of Europe. Armed uprisings

in 1830, 1846, and 1863 failed to weaken the control of occupying powers, who forbade public use of the Polish language (except in the Austrian partition) and exerted strict censorship in all aspects of life. Reprisals following unsuccessful insurrections led artists, intellectuals, and politicians such as the composer Frédéric Chopin and the poet Adam Mickiewicz to relocate to cities like Paris and Munich. Deprived of a country in reality, educated Poles considered the need to maintain a “virtual” nation paramount. They accomplished this through culture—art, literature, and music. The Partition of Poland provides the context for understanding nineteenth-century Polish culture and ideas, in which nostalgia for a sovereign past and the struggle for reunification and independence played a fundamental role.

In 1842 writer Seweryn Goszczyński published *On the Need for a National Polish Painting*, expressing a general urge among Polish intellectuals for a national presence in the art world. Jan Matejko (1838–93) selected dramatic and inspiring moments from Polish history for monumental paintings such as the almost 4 × 8 meter (13 × 26 foot) *Prussian Oath* (1882, Figure 14.13). Here, Matejko envisioned the 1525 ceremony in which Albrecht von Hohenzollern, Duke of Brandenburg and Prince of Prussia, swore allegiance to the Polish king Zygmunt the Old. Matejko recreated a crowded scene at court when Poland was at the height of its political power. This moment of national pride assumed a particularly poignant dimension for a nation officially deprived of its identity. Polish viewers would have understood that the roles of homage-paying were now tragically reversed, since a large portion of formerly Polish territories now belonged to Prussia. Matejko strove for authenticity in details of architecture and costume and relied on portraits for the likeness of the participants. Matejko strove for acceptance according to French standards by painting a typical history painting in the accepted academic style. This decision was important because regions outside Western Europe were often perceived as backward and inferior. In order to establish legitimacy, foreigners from maids to writers needed to prove their mastery of established western European norms. Matejko succeeded in establishing an international reputation. In 1873, he was elected a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris and offered directorship of the Prague Academy, a position

Figure 14.13
Jan Matejko, *Prussian Oath*,
1882. Oil on canvas, 388 ×
785 cm (12 ft 7 in × 25 ft 9 in).
Wawel Royal Castle, Krakow.



he declined in order to develop the art school in Krakow (capital of the Austrian partition).

A younger generation of Polish artists grappled with the issue of reconciling their desire to produce Polish art with their urge to participate in modern international trends. There was an ideological split in Poland between traditionalists, who considered academic realism appropriate for picturing national themes, and modernists, who felt that such an enterprise was superficial, since it depicted only appearance and not the “soul” of the Polish nation. Modernists shunned the generic pictorial language of academic realism and developed personal styles that expressed their attachment to Polish culture and history while linking them to the modern (foreign) trends like Impressionism and Symbolism. Jacek Malczewski (Figure 13.22) combined patriotic and personal concerns in a bizarre composition, whose nationalistic references would easily have been understood by a native audience. As if to alleviate doubt about the political content of his painting, Malczewski wrote on the back of the canvas: “Prologue. Vision. The Past Century in Poland. An Entire Century.” Malczewski shared Matejko’s belief that artists should play a leading role in fostering allegiance to Poland, a conviction undoubtedly strengthened by the experience of his own family, who lost their estate because of their participation in the 1863 insurrection.

For young Polish artists (and critics and writers) Impressionism and Symbolism represented liberation from academic realism and solidarity with aesthetically and politically advanced colleagues elsewhere in Europe. Like progressive artists elsewhere, Young Poland artists cultivated individual styles suited to conveying their ideas and feelings about Polish identity. In *Spring* (1898, Figure 14.14), Wojciech Weiss (1875–1950) embedded ideas of youth, vitality, fertility, and rebirth in the Polish landscape. The imagery of *Spring* belonged to the late nineteenth-century trend to masculinize and conquer nature. No longer perceived simply as the site of antithesis of civilization, nature, and the national landscape in particular, became the source of moral and physical strength for individuals and the nation. Ennobled by a low viewpoint similar to that in Mackensen’s *Moor Madonna*, Weiss’s youth is rooted in a Polish meadow, and holds pussy willow branches, a sign of early spring in southern Poland. A paragon of youthful vigor and self-confidence, he symbolizes youth, Young Poland, and the nation itself, which, in another 20 years, would regain political independence. In the background, a young man chases a young woman. With typically Symbolist ambiguity, it is unclear whether the pair exists in the same space as the boy, or whether they represent an imaginary projection. Are they an erotic fantasy or an Edenic vision of freedom in the expansive Polish landscape? Is it a free Poland successfully escaping occupation, or the unproductive separation of oppositional (male-female) forces that must unite in order to create a balanced whole?

Despite occupation, there was a lively cultural scene in Krakow, capital of the Austrian sector. Unlike Russia and Prussia, Austria allowed citizens of its empire to speak their own languages and retain their customs. The Society for Friends of the Fine Arts was established in Krakow in 1854 as an art association promoting art appreciation among its middle-class membership. It held regular exhibitions of mainly Polish and occasionally foreign art but by the mid-1890s many artists felt its taste had fossilized and no longer encouraged contemporary art. As a result, fifteen artists, including Malczewski, founded the Association of Polish Artists Sztuka (*Sztuka*, meaning “art”) in October 1897. Sztuka was an exclusive group with membership tightly controlled through elections to ensure the quality of its exhibitions and to



Figure 14.14
Wojciech Weiss, *Spring*, 1898.
Oil on canvas. National Museum
in Warsaw.

maintain its commitment to modernist trends. In an era when a national presence at international exhibitions was crucial to asserting national identity, Polish artists were required to exhibit in the displays of their occupiers. However, in 1891 Polish artists from all three sectors, along with those living abroad, exhibited together in a section called “Works of Polish Artists” at the International Art Exhibition in Berlin; Matejko and Malczewski were included. The following year, the Munich International Exhibition of Fine Arts at the Glaspalast included a Polish section, providing fuel for political provocation when the future Polish national anthem, “Poland has Not Yet Perished,” was played at the opening, arousing the anger of the Russian cultural representative from Warsaw, capital of the Russian sector. This incident destroyed any hope of a separate Polish section at the 1900 Exposition universelle; Polish artists were included in the Austrian and Russian displays.

FINLAND

The *Kalevala*, Finland’s national epic, provided a focal point for national identity in the late nineteenth century. A synthesis of folktales and epic poems collected by ethnologist Elias Lönnrot, the *Kalevala* (1835) is a complicated epic that traces the development of Finnish civilization from the origin of the world through the founding of the Kingdom of Karelia (eastern Finland). A recurring theme is the futile

search of the wizard Väinämöinen for a wife, an episode from which Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931) painted in a large triptych with a frame he designed and carved himself (1891, Figure 14.15). The left panel shows Väinämöinen's first encounter with the beautiful Aino, whom he later won from her brother Joukahainen in a singing contest. The right panel shows a miserable Aino who contemplates joining the maids of Vellamo, water spirits, rather than marrying the elderly Väinämöinen. She drowns herself and joins them in the form of a small salmon, which Väinämöinen catches and throws back. As the fish hits the water, it momentarily transforms into Aino, and Väinämöinen tries desperately but unsuccessfully to recapture her, the subject of *Aino Myth*'s central panel. The scenes are all set in the wilderness of Karelia (where Gallen-Kallela often visited), whose quiet and beauty evoked thoughts about the mythic past and a nature animated by spirits, as in Böcklin's *Silence of the Forest* (Figure 13.3). This painting incorporates elements conforming to academic visual standards—naturalistic female nudes, wholesome peasants, accurate landscapes—along with a pessimistic theme about the inability to control one's fate, with frustration and disappointment trumping hope and fulfillment. The gilded frame suggests ancient architecture and serves the Symbolist function of making viewers aware of the painting as an object of contemplation. Relevant texts from the *Kalevala* inscribed in the separating panels describe to viewers the scenes represented.

Gallen-Kallela studied at the Finnish Art Association's Drawing School in Helsinki before moving to Paris in 1884, where he studied at the Académie Julian. A passionate nationalist, Gallen-Kallela painted his first *Aino Triptych* (Bank of Finland, Helsinki) in 1889 and dreamed of establishing a Finnish style rooted in national history and landscape. He wanted to initiate a Finnish renaissance with Finnish style architecture decorated with Finnish subjects, especially from the *Kalevala*. To this end, he studied the fresco technique in Italy in 1898 and decorated the Finnish pavilion at the 1900 Exposition universelle with *Kalevala* frescoes; he also contributed textile and furniture designs based on Finnish folk art. Gallen-Kallela's agenda found a receptive public in the 1890s, when Russia rescinded legislation guaranteeing Finland's relative autonomy.

Figure 14.15

Akseli Gallen-Kallela, *Aino Myth*, 1891. Oil on canvas, 200 × 413 cm (6 ft 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ in × 13 ft 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in). Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki.



HUNGARY

Hungary (a multi-ethnic nation comprising more than a dozen different language groups) was occupied with few interruptions since the Middle Ages: the French in the fourteenth century, the Ottoman Turks during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and Austria since then. Under the leadership of Lajos Kossuth, Hungary fought unsuccessfully for independence in 1848–49, but in 1867 it negotiated an agreement granting it internal autonomy. The Hungarian National Association of Fine Arts began holding exhibitions at the Academy of Sciences in 1863, and a national art academy opened in 1871 (Teachers' Institute for Design and Drawing). The Esterházy art collection was purchased by the state in 1871, forming the nucleus of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, established in 1896.

In 1867, Bertalan Székely (1835–1910) painted *Women of Eger* (Figure 14.16), an historical subject referring to the current political situation. Székely attended the Vienna Academy from 1851 to 1855, where he attended the classes of Ferdinand Waldmüller (Figure 7.7), but then returned to Hungary, where he worked as a portrait and sign painter. Székely had greater ambitions, however, and left for Munich in 1859 to study with Karl von Piloty (Figure 11.16). Following travels in France and The Netherlands, Székely returned to Hungary, where he took a leading role in the Hungarian art world, teaching (at the Teachers' Institute), writing, and illustrating books. In the 1880s, Székely, like Puvis de Chavannes, was primarily occupied with mural painting, and executed commissions for Pécs Cathedral (1887–89), the Kecskemét city hall (1896–97), and the castles of Buda (1890) and Vajdahunyad (1900–02).

Women of Eger depicts an event from 1522, when a Hungarian militia of 2,500 not only withstood a month-long siege by an Ottoman army of 150,000, but forced the enemy to retreat. The heroic deeds of women and men enabled Hungary to delay the inevitable conquest by 70 years. Here, Székely focused on the courageous woman who firmly grasps the arm of her wounded husband, as she swings his sword to fend off attacking Ottomans. Her resemblance to Austrian Empress Elizabeth, whose support of Hungary was pivotal in achieving the 1867 Compromise, suggests a homage to the Empress. If so, Székely's painting not only reminded viewers of Hungarian bravery, with the woman representing the nation in a manner similar to Delacroix's *Liberty* (Figure 3.13), but acknowledged indebtedness to the outspoken Empress who championed the Hungarian cause until her assassination in 1898.

Like Caillebotte and Monet, Károly Ferenczy (1862–1917) studied law, but preferred art. He enrolled at the Académie Julian in 1887, returning to Hungary in 1889. Ferenczy moved to Munich in 1893, joining the circle of his compatriot Simon Hollósy (1857–1918) and moved with him to Nagybánya in 1896 in order to start an artists' colony. *Bird Song* (1893, Figure 14.17) associates Hungarian identity with Hungarian nature. Like Mackensen's *Moor Madonna*, the female figure is immersed in her natural setting. Oddly, she seems unaware of the viewer's presence despite its close proximity; it is almost as if the viewer were part of the forest environment, as in Arnold Böcklin's *Silence of the Forest* (Figure 13.3). The girl embraces the birch tree as if completing a circuit of biomystical interdependence and gazes toward a point beyond the confines of the canvas, entranced by, perhaps, a singing bird. Like Symbolist artists, Ferenczy suggested music, here, the music of nature, adding an abstract and meditative dimension to his image. This urge to add a non-visual dimension to painting continued into the twentieth century, with artists like Vassily Kandinsky and František Kupka suggesting sound, Giacomo Balla (1871–1958) and



For a more detailed explanation of the significance of the Battle of Eger go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos



Figure 14.16

Bertalan Székely, *Women of Eger*, 1867.

Oil on canvas, 227 × 177 cm (7 ft 5 in × 5 ft 9½ in).

Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.



Figure 14.17
Károly Ferenczy, *Bird Song*,
1893. Oil on canvas, 106 × 78 cm
(41⅞ × 30⅞ in). Photo
Hungarian National Gallery,
Budapest.

Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) attempting to convey the idea of motion, and Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque (1882–1963), time.

CONCLUSION

The destabilization of traditional identities—individual and collective—led to a search for new ways of defining one’s place in the world. Artists operating outside the academic system formed bonds with like-minded colleagues based on shared aesthetic, economic, and social ideas. Those appalled by the negative aspects of urban life often took refuge in the countryside and formed artists’ colonies. Here, they could work undistracted in a peaceful environment surrounded by the rural nature they painted and in the company of fellow artists who shared their values. Artists who chose to remain in the city formed organizations whose purpose could be as broad as exhibiting the work of member artists, or as narrow as the promotion of a particular ideology, such as the Salon Rose + Croix. The need to define one’s place in the world applied to nations as well as individuals, with artists playing a key role in defining

characteristics of national identity. The upheaval at the end of the nineteenth century led not only to withdrawal and escape, but also to engagement. Belief in the power of art to change the way people think guided many artists in their choice of subject matter, style, and where their works were exhibited. The fragmentation of modern life, recognized at the end of the eighteenth century by Blake, became apparent to many by the end of the nineteenth century. Strategies for restoring balance and wholeness led some to look to the past for models, while others sought new ways of negotiating perceived conflicts and oppositions.



For maps of locations mentioned in this chapter go to www.routledge.com/textbooks/facos.

Epilogue

Looking Toward the Twentieth Century

The journey from Benjamin West's *Agrippina* (Figure 2.2) and George Stubbs's *Lion Attacking a Horse* (Figure 4.1) in the 1760s to Claude Monet's *Ronen Cathedral* (Figure 14.9) and Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (Figure 13.17) in the 1890s was a long and often confusing one. The conditions of daily life changed vastly from one generation to the next, and a sense of coherence and stability seemed increasingly difficult to attain. Europe transformed from a predominantly rural, agrarian culture to an industrial, urban one. The stability of absolutist rule in the eighteenth century was exchanged for anxiety over job security and anarchist bombs in the late nineteenth century. The path to the future seemed ever more contested and uncertain. At the same time, it was a period of liberation and democratization, when people and ideas were gradually freed from tradition. Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, and Auguste Rodin modeled the complexity of life for the modern artist at the end of the nineteenth century. They studied past masters and contemporary innovators, and reflected on their own places in the world. They also exemplified the heroic refusal to conform that characterized the innovative spirit of modernist pioneers.

The roots of early twentieth-century innovators lay in the nineteenth century. Modernist pioneers resisted established norms, processed ideas of their contemporaries and predecessors, and, finally, listened to their own inner voices. The most influential figures began as Symbolists. Vasily Kandinsky (1866–1944), František Kupka (1871–1957), Piet Mondrian (1872–1944), Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957), Kazimir Malevich (1878–1935), Paul Klee (1879–1940), and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) all grew up and began their art studies in the nineteenth century. They were all familiar with Impressionism and Neoimpressionism, but it was Symbolism that struck a responsive chord at the beginning of their careers. The disillusionment of youth and the chaos and conflict of the time in which they lived combined to make Symbolism the natural choice for artists probing existential questions. What united these pioneers was the desire to discern and express the universal patterns underlying the complexity and apparent randomness of modern life. With the exception of Picasso, they took the Symbolist's quest for spiritual meaning to one of its logical conclusions: abstraction. However, in spite of their common exposure to tradition and the art of their contemporaries and their common commitment to truth, each artist arrived at a distinct and highly recognizable personal style—one of the hallmarks of modernism in art.

Glossary

Allegory—expression of abstract ideas through figures and symbols.

Anarchy—a political system without a governing structure in which every individual enjoys absolute liberty.

Aquatint—a printing (etching) technique in which varnish is applied to a metal plate in those areas that will remain white. Then the surface is coated with resin powder and heated so the resin adheres to the surface. This is sometimes done in layers to achieve tonal gradations. The artist then uses a needle to draw, scraping through to the metal plate. Afterwards the plate is submerged in acid, which eats into the drawn lines and around the resin grains, creating dappled areas of ink. The process developed in the seventeenth century. See <http://www.moma.org/interactives/projects/2001/whatisaprint/print.html>.

Baroque—the artistic style following the Renaissance and dominant in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In contrast to Renaissance art (linear, restrained, intellectual, balanced), Baroque art is typically painterly, expressive, sensual, and dramatic.

Calotype—literally, “beautiful print.” One of the first photographic processes. It produces images on paper sensitized with silver nitrate and potassium iodide. Prior to exposure to light, the paper is treated with gallo-nitrate of silver, and afterwards the image is fixed with hypo. Shapes blocking the light remain light; the surrounding areas turn dark. William Henry Fox Talbot invented the process in 1839.

Camera lucida—literally, “light room.” A portable aid for copying consisting of a prism mounted above a drawing board that reflects a scene onto it. It was patented by William Hyde Wollaston in 1807.

Camera obscura—literally, “dark room.” A box with a small hole on one side through which light (and an image) passes. The image is reflected by a mirror onto a drawing surface. Camera obscuras have been used since ancient times.

Cloisonism—a style of Postimpressionist painting that arose in Paris during the 1880s. It is characterized by clearly delineated forms and unmodulated areas of color. The term was coined by art critic Édouard Dujardin in 1888.

Engraving—a printed image made from an incised metal plate. Lines are incised on (usually) a copper plate with the use of a burin. Ink is poured on the plate, and seeps into the incision. The plate surface is wiped clean and when paper is pressed onto the plate it absorbs the ink in the crevices. The crevice edges wear down with each printing, so the first images are the sharpest ones. Engraving emerged in the fifteenth century and was especially popular in Germanic regions.

Fresco—true fresco is a painting technique used for the decoration of walls. Powdered pigments dissolved in water are applied to wet plaster, forming a chemical bond. Fresco paintings are durable and their colors do not fade. Popular in ancient Greece and Rome, fresco painting was revived in Italy in the late fourteenth century and was popular in Italy during the Renaissance. The Sistine Chapel is painted in this technique.

Infrared reflectography—a technique used to examine layers of painting and drawing beneath a painting's surface. Infrared rays penetrate beneath a painting's surface to reveal underdrawing and changes made by an artist while working. Photographs can be made using this technique.

Lithograph—a printed image made from a lithographic stone. An image is drawn with a grease crayon onto a special kind of limestone. Water is then applied to the surface, adhering to the undrawn areas. Ink is then applied with a roller and adheres to the grease crayon drawing. A sheet of paper is placed on the stone and sent through a press, which transfers the drawn design from stone to paper. In principle, an unlimited number of identical prints can be made. The process was developed in 1796 by Alois Senefelder. See <http://www.moma.org/interactives/projects/2001/whatisaprint/print.html>.

Lutheranism—the branch of Christianity established by Martin Luther in the early sixteenth century. It resulted from a disagreement with Roman Catholicism on several issues. Roman Catholicism was hierarchical and maintained that the Pope was the infallible authority on spiritual matters. Martin Luther asserted that the Bible was the only reliable source of spiritual guidance. Roman Catholicism invested the clergy with the authority to interpret the Bible, whereas Lutheranism asserted an individual's ability to do so. There were three important outcomes of Lutheranism: (1) literacy (necessary for reading the Bible), (2) the Hundred Years' War, when some rulers decided to assert their absolute authority independent of the Roman Catholic church, and (3) the belief that faith, not deeds, is the key to salvation.

Metope—a rectangular stone panel between two triglyphs in a Doric frieze. In ancient Greece these were often carved.

Pediment—the uppermost, triangular area of a building's façade, often containing sculpture.

Pogrom—communal violence against a religious group, particularly Jews.

Relief—sculptural elements projecting from a flat surface.

Republican—opponent of monarchy; advocate of a form of government by and for its citizens. Used especially to describe individuals supporting the French Revolutionary values of liberty, equality, and solidarity (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*).

Roman Catholicism—the branch of Christianity that split from Orthodox Christianity in 1054. A rigidly structured, hierarchical organization, it maintains that the Pope is ultimate earthly spiritual authority and the direct successor of the Apostle Peter.

Underdrawing—drawing on a surface intended as a guide for the painter. It is eventually concealed by paint.

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